

Paycare

Everyday Health Cover since 1874



The Hidden Benefits of Walking

WHY WALKING IS GOOD FOR YOU, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

The Hidden Benefits of Walking

THE WONDERS OF A GOOD WALK!

We all know that exercise is good for our health, but to keep our bodies (and minds) in tip top condition, we don't need to be fully-trained Olympian athletes or indeed world champion long-distance runners. In fact, the simple act of walking – whether a swift stride to the shops, a leisurely stroll through the park, or a brisk power-walk round the block – can have a huge impact on both our mental and physical wellbeing. Fantastic news!

There are of course the obvious benefits – such as helping us lose weight, improving circulation, and boosting vitamin D. But there are also those not-so-obvious ones, and we've put together a list of just a few of these for you. Did you know that walking...?

Studies¹ have shown that a **brisk walk** can be just as effective in mild and moderate cases of depression as **antidepressants**



Makes Us Happy

One of the major benefits of walking is stress relief as the act of **physical exercise increases concentrations of norepinephrine in the body** – a chemical which moderates the brain's response to stress. Studies¹ have shown that a brisk walk can be just as effective in mild and moderate cases of depression as antidepressants – with only positive side-effects.



Increases Productivity

Employees **who regularly exercise are said to be far more productive** and have much more energy than their more sedentary counterparts. Not only that, but 12noon is apparently the **optimum time of the day to reap the benefits** so, if you fancy surviving the midday slump, be sure to take that lunchtime stroll. Some organisations even run dedicated walking clubs at break times – great for relieving those work tensions, enhancing relationships with colleagues, and boosting afternoon outputs.



Prevents Dementia

Walking, like all forms of physical exercise, **boosts the chemicals in the brain** that support and prevent degradation of the hippocampus – a vital part of the brain for memory and learning. Researchers² have found that **walking for just 20 minutes a day boosts memory** and improves overall brain function.

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Encourages Creativity

It's widely reported that the late (and hugely successful) founder of Apple, **Steve Jobs, regularly held meetings on the move**. And, research by Stanford University supports his thinking by demonstrating that walking significantly boosts creative inspiration. Friedrich Nietzsche even said all those years ago that **'all truly great thoughts are conceived by walking'** – so if you want to get those creative juices well and truly flowing, get up on your feet!



Is Kind on Your Pocket

Walking is of course one of the **most accessible forms of exercise**, with no need for expensive membership fees, fancy equipment, or the latest Lycra number! In fact, **all you need is yourself**, a pair of shoes, and some good old motivation to get outdoors (or indeed indoors!).



Strengthens Friendships

By asking friends, family members or colleagues to join you, you can **make a simple walk into a full-on social occasion**. Whether that's catching up on the latest gossip, being an open ear for a mate in need, or putting the world to rights – forge those bonds whilst improving your health!



Boosts the Economy

A report supported by the Walking for Health initiative found that **physical inactivity costs the UK economy up to £10billion a year** through sick days, healthcare costs, and early deaths – so do it for your country and get your walking shoes on!

And finally, in the words of American poet and essayist, Gary Snyder...

“Walking is the great adventure, the first meditation, a practice of heartiness and soul primary to humankind. Walking is the exact balance between spirit and humility.” We couldn't have put it better ourselves!

¹ Harvard Medical School

² Journal of Alzheimer's disease

³ Cambridge University



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How do you make sure you're active at work?

We'd love to hear your ideas, so please do get in touch on 01902 371000 or email enquiries@paycare.org.



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