

The Benefits of Taking a Walk

When was the last time you took a walk?

No, really? When was the last time you left behind the four walls of your living room or the little grey bubble of your cubicle, slipped on those sneakers, and hit the pavement? For most of us it may have been a while.

It's easy to get wrapped up in the motions of everyday life. We work through our lunches, we sit at our desks for eight hours, and then we come home and make dinner. After taking care of all our chores, all we want to do is sit down and relax.

Some of us, the fitness savvy and health gurus of the world, are absolutely dedicated to hitting the gym nearly every day. But let's be honest here, the gym isn't for everyone. So what if I told you that going for a daily walk was a fun, free, and easy way to exercise, improve your mood, and lose some weight?

Personally, I love to go for walks and they are most definitely my exercise of choice. Since I managed to fit walking into my daily routine, I have noticed that I am much happier and healthier than I was before. Walking has changed my life and it can change yours as well.

So why exactly is walking so great?

Walking is a great way to get in your thirty minutes of daily recommended exercise. In my opinion, going for walks is the best way to get exercise! Walking is fun because I can do it with friends and family, with my dog, or by myself. I love that I don't have to drive to the gym to get my exercise in for the day and my favorite part is that I get to be outside. You can choose to walk around the neighborhood, the park, or opt for more challenging hiking trails.

So what are the major health benefits of walking?

Walking helps you keep off the pounds. Of course, if you are exercising regularly you're going to maintain a healthy weight. Walking can help to keep you fit and trim, especially during those winter months and holidays when you're more likely to pack on the pounds. I have noticed that since I started to walk regularly that I have slowly, but surely began to lose weight and tone up my arms, legs, and abs. Truthfully, I feel better than I have since I was a little kid.

Walking gives you a boost of energy. Some days I just feel really run down and tired after work. My solution? Go for a walk! While the thought of walking sends my tired brain and body

into rebellion, I realized that I always feel more alert and awake after walking. Trust me when I say it's more energizing than that cup of coffee or the Red Bull you're chugging.

Other major benefits of walking:

1. Prevention and management of chronic illnesses such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes!
2. It can increase your lifespan by up to seven years!
3. Strengthens your bones and muscles and helps keep you strong.
4. Strengthens your heart.

Mental health benefits

Regular walks can improve your mental health as well as your physical health and is a great way to improve your mood. Walking outdoors helps to expose you to natural sunlight which can help fight off Seasonal Affective Disorder during those dark, gloomy months. In addition, studies have shown that when you walk feelings of anger and hostility decrease.

Whenever I am struggling or having a stressful day, the first things that I do is strap on my sneakers and get moving! When I walk I feel a sense of peace and the stress of the day melts away as those endorphins begin to flood my system. I have also found that going for walks is a great way to spark creativity and solve problems! I always seem to come up with my best ideas for blogging when I'm walking outdoors.

Other mental health benefits of walking:

1. Improved self esteem
2. Better sleep
3. Reduces anxiety
4. Reduces your risk of depression

It's not hard to see why so many love to go walking! Not only is walking fun and a great way to socialize or get in touch with nature, it has so many amazing health benefits. So get out there and get moving! Your body and mind will thank you for it!