



Health Yourself Byte

5 Surprising Benefits of Walking

The simple activity of walking has many health benefits. If it could be prescribed in a pill form, it would be the most widely prescribed medication in the world. Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls walking, “the closest thing we have to a wonder drug”.

1. Walking counteracts the effects of weight-promoting genes. Harvard researchers observed 32 obesity promoting genes in over 12,000 people to assess how much these genes effect obesity. They discovered that among the study participants who walked briskly about an hour a day, the effects were cut in half.
2. Walking helps to tame a sweet tooth. Two studies from the University of Exeter found that a 15 minute walk can curb cravings for chocolate and even reduce the amount of chocolate one would eat in stressful situations. The latest research also confirms that walking can reduce cravings and intake of sugary snacks.
3. Walking reduces the risk of breast cancer. It has been proven that activity such as walking reduces the risk of breast cancer. The American Cancer Society did further research to assess how much walking would lower the risk even for women with multiple risk factors. Women who walked seven or more hours per week had a 14% lower risk of breast cancer than those who walked 3 or more hours per week.
4. Walking eases joint pain. Several studies have found that walking reduces arthritis related pain and walking 5-6 miles per week can even prevent arthritis from forming in the first place. Walking protects the joints, especially knees and hips which are most susceptible to osteoarthritis, by lubricating them and strengthening muscles that support them.
5. Walking boosts immune function. Walking can help protect you during cold and flu season. A study of greater than 1,000 men and women found that those who walked at least 20 minutes a day, at least 5 days per week, had 43% fewer sick days than those who exercised once a week or less. If the people who exercised did get sick, it was for a shorter duration, and their symptoms were milder.



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