

Healthy Living

The top 5 benefits of walking

By [Mitra Malek](#)

Getting fit doesn't require a special regimen or big-time exertion.

All you have to do is walk. Of course, comfy shoes and clothes help. But that's pretty much all you need.



“Our bodies were made to walk, so walking should be a movement that takes minimal effort, but can provide endless benefits,” says Shelly Mamo, an exercise specialist with Colonial Life.

Harvard Medical School [recommends](#) walking 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Odds are you already do that – taking care of errands while on foot, for example. If not, it's a great place to start. Next, simply ramp it up so you're walking 30 to 60 minutes at a decent clip, almost every

day.

Here are five top reasons to hoof it:

1. Walking boosts heart health. Any time you move around, you're improving circulation and raising your heart rate. Both make your heart happy. Walking briskly can lower your risk of [high blood pressure](#), high cholesterol and diabetes as much as running. That's according to a [recent study](#) in a medical journal of the American Heart Association.
2. Walking strengthens muscles and bones and helps with weight control. Walking is exercise, and exercise does all the aforementioned good stuff for you. Simple as that. The bonus is that walking is gentle and easy.
3. Walking eases joint pain. The [Arthritis Foundation](#) is a big fan of walking, which is generally easy on the joints. Walking is an easy way to lubricate them. Put simply, most joints don't have direct blood supply and instead rely on synovial fluid to stay healthy. You need movement to get that fluid flowing. Walking also keeps joints mobile by strengthening the muscles that support them.
4. Walking makes you sharper. It helps with [creativity](#). That's because it doesn't take much thought to walk, freeing your mind for other pursuits. And because you're not stuck in one spot – presumably you're scenery is changing as you're taking strides – there's plenty for your mind to play with. Studies also have shown walking could help prevent dementia and [Alzheimer's](#) disease.
5. Walking makes you feel good. We all know that exercise is a proven way to get a happiness boost, thanks to hormones our body releases while we do it. [Walking](#) is no exception. “It improves your mood,” Mamo says.