

About WalkBoston

WalkBoston makes walking safer and easier in Massachusetts to encourage better health, a cleaner environment and vibrant communities. Our education and advocacy programs give voice to people to make their communities more walkable. We develop and implement innovative programs that address social and physical barriers to walking.

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MAKING MASSACHUSETTS MORE WALKABLE

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walk
your way
to health



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www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden

'Walking is the closest thing to a magic bullet for health'

Graham Colditz, MD, Washington University, School of Medicine

Regular activity, like walking, is hard to beat when it comes to keeping yourself healthy. It lowers the risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, arthritis and osteoporosis, helps keep weight in check and boosts your mood.

Physical activity is especially important in the prevention of chronic disease. Almost 1 out of every 2 adults [133 million Americans] had at least one chronic illness in 2005. To create a healthier, wealthier and happier population, we need to reduce chronic diseases and find ways to alleviate their symptoms. The United Nations' World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention agree that chronic diseases can be prevented or delayed by being active and walking. There is a linear relation: increases in physical activity and fitness lead to improved health. [*Canada Medical Journal, 2006*]

Walking helps alleviate the symptoms of chronic disease. Recuperation can be boosted and maintained by regular walking. This may mean a major change in lifestyle, but it's worth it! Patients can reap substantial benefits and increase their capacity to participate in normal everyday activities.

Conspire to have a long life. Men and women age 50–71 who took a brisk walk nearly every day had a 27% reduced death rate compared to non-exercisers. Adding 20 minutes of vigorous exercise, 3 days a week resulted in a 32% reduced death rate. Combining vigorous exercise and walking each week produced a 50% reduced mortality. [*Arch Internal Medicine, 2007*]

Get 30 minutes of daily physical activity like walking. This time can be split into three 10-minute spurts, six 5-minute sections, or fifteen 2-minute quickies. [*U.S. Centers for Disease Control 2/4/7, 2011*]

For your heart

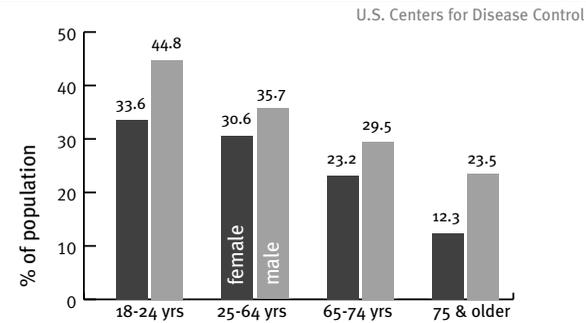
- Walking equals other exercises in heart benefits, matching the benefits of running or aerobic exercise performed at 75% – 85% of a maximum heart rate. It offers these health benefits while resulting in fewer injuries because of the lower force hitting the ground when walking vs. running. [*U.S. Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines, 2008*]
- Heart-related diseases are closely related to the capacity of the heart to pump blood to meet the body's needs. You can strengthen your heart's capacity by walking. [*Mayo Clinic, 2011*]
- Among the more than 72,000 women in the Nurses' Health Study, those who walked 3 or more hours/week reduced their risk of a coronary event by 35% compared with women who did not walk. Retired men who walked less than 1 mile/day had nearly twice the mortality rates of those who walked more than 2 miles/day. [*Harvard University, Brigham & Women's Hospital, ongoing*]
- Studies involving 8,900 patients confirmed the benefits of exercise in rehabilitation from coronary heart disease. [*American Journal of Medicine, 2004*]

For diabetes

- A study of over 3,200 overweight adults found that a good diet and walking 2.5 hours/week reduced their risk of developing diabetes by 58%. Participants aged 60 and older reduced their risk by 71%. [*New England Journal of Medicine, 2002*]
- 80% of type 2 diabetes can be prevented by changing diet and increasing physical activity, lowering the possibility of kidney failure, lower-extremity amputations, and blindness that can result from diabetes. [*World Diabetes Foundation, 2011*]
- People diagnosed with diabetes should: stop smoking and consuming alcohol, eat a healthy diet, avoid stress,* exercise regularly,* reduce weight if overweight.* [* can be helped by walking regularly] [*World Diabetes Foundation, 2011*]

The full text of each reference is online at WalkBoston.org.

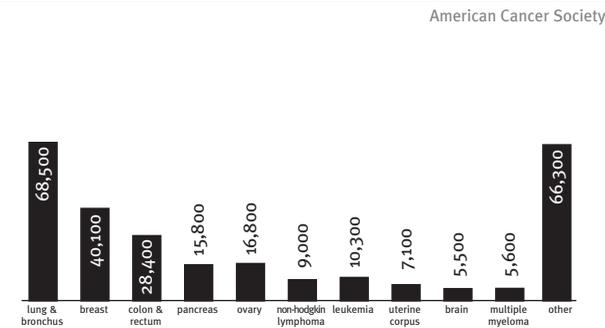
Americans getting physical activity [30 min, 5X's per week]:



For your brain

- Aerobic exercise is important for all ages. It gives children the capacity to learn and increases their memory, attention, and decision-making – important foundations for a healthy life. [*Neuroscience, 2011*]
- Physical activity maximizes kids' achievements and cognitive outcomes based on analysis of 59 studies. [*Research Quarterly for Exercise & Sport, 2011*]
- Exercise affects learning, memory and cognition. College students showed improved performance on recognition memory tasks after exercise. [*NYU current research*]
- Higher levels of physical activity in 18,000 women over a 2-year period led to improved cognitive scores. [*Nurses' Health Study, JAMA, 2004*]
- Brisk walking of 2.5 hours/week can improve memory for older people, with effects as good as those from approved drugs. [*Australia JAMA, 2008*]
- The psychological effects of exercise alleviate some forms of unipolar depression and chronic fatigue syndrome. A therapeutic effect may also help panic and generalized anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, conversion and somatoform pain disorder. [*National Institutes of Health, 2000*]
- Walking 5 miles a week reduced brain atrophy and cognitive decline, resulting in a 50% reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. [*Neurology, 2010*]
- Over a follow-up period of 6 years, sedentary men were 1.8 times more likely to develop dementia than men who walk at least 2 miles a day. [*JAMA, 2004*]

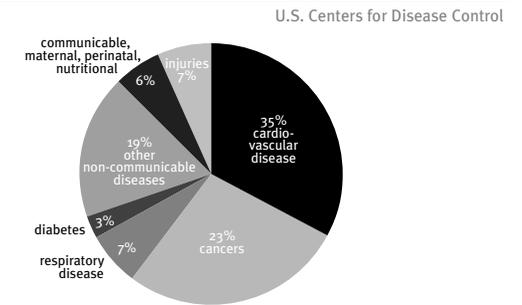
Leading causes of cancer deaths in females:



For cancer

- Exercise improves quality of life for patients diagnosed with cancer, during treatment and after surgery or therapy. Exercise improves motivation and adherence in cancer patients. [*Physician & Sportsmedicine, 2000*]
- Adults who increase their physical activity, either in intensity, duration, or frequency, can reduce the risk of developing colon cancer by 30% – 40% relative to those who are sedentary. [*National Cancer Institute/National Institutes of Health, 2012*]
- Walking just 2 miles a day cuts the risk of death almost in half, especially in cases of cancer. Sedentary older men were 2 1/2 times more likely to die of cancer than men walking 2 miles per day. [*New England Journal of Medicine, 1998*]
- Risks of death from breast and uterine cancer were reduced 19% in those who walked 1 – 3 hours/week, by 54% for walking 3 – 5 hours/week. [*Harvard University Women's Health Study, 2012*]
- Women who walked briskly for 1.25 – 2.5 hours/week had an 18% reduction in breast cancer risk. [*JAMA, 2003*]
- Women who exercised more than 6 hours/week were 27% less likely to develop ovarian cancer than women exercising less than 1 hour/week. [*Obstetrics and Gynecology, 2000*]
- Physical activity in men can result in a 20% risk reduction of lung cancer, regardless of the disease's stage or limits on physical activity. [*National Cancer Institute/National Institutes of Health, 2012*]

Leading causes of death:



For your life

- Nearly all chronic diseases are related to obesity, which puts stress on muscles, heart and bones. Walking helps reduce weight, lowers risks and alleviates symptoms. [*U.S. Centers for Disease Control 24/7 (USCDC), 2011*]
- Brisk walking should make your heart beat faster. Walking 3 miles/hour – about a 20 min./mile – you should be able to talk – it's like walking a bit late to an appointment. [*World Health Organization, 2007*]
- Walk at work. Every hour, move for a short time [5 min]. Get a drink, walk to the washroom, take the stairs, or join a co-worker for a lunchtime stroll. Each move helps lower weight, blood lipids and glucose tolerance [a measure of diabetes risk that can yield better metabolic health]. [*USCDC, 2007*]
- Sedentary men who began exercising after the age of 45 have a 24% lower death rate than those who remain inactive. On average, sedentary people who became active later in life improved their life expectancy by about 1.6 years. [*Harvard Alumni Study, 2000*]
- A study of sedentary women showed that short bouts of brisk walking [three 10-minute walks/day] resulted in improved fitness and were as effective in decreasing body fat as longer bouts. [*Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 1998*]
- Symptoms of arthritis, osteoporosis and low back pain can be reduced through exercise, improving quality of life and overall physical fitness. [*Canadian Family Physician, 2012*]