WALKING THE STRESS AWAY

An investigation on the benefits of walking for thirty minutes a day on a persons physical, mental and other aspects of overall health. Walking once a day is thought to relieve stress and improve over all physical health.

The Problem

In a study conducted by the JED Foundation, 62% of students stated that their mental health is worse than before the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also found that 82% of students face anxiety, and 60% of students have a difficult time coping with stress. Mental health is a major issue for many students, and the current is how it impacted my own person. My mental health tracker from the past the for many students, and the current state of the world has only made that worse. I looked at the benefits of walking for 30 minutes a day, and

Problems Surrounding Overall Student Health According to Georgetown University Students are more likely to experience:

- Stress, anxiety, & depression
- Cold and Flus

The Experiment

I went on a 30 minute walk every day for 21 days, and logged my overall feeling of health on a rating scale of happy, mediocre, and bad as depicted by the emoji's above. This task was completed at various times of day, and was only completed outside.



- Meningitis, and other diseases due to close proximity
- Lack of physical activity due to packed schedule
 - Difficulty

 - Sleeping
 - Eating disorders
 - Addiction

[9]

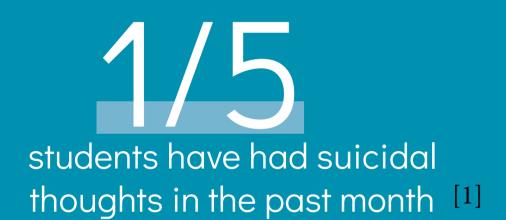
Physical benefits of walking for 30 minutes a day

- Increased cardiovascular and pulmonary fitness
- Reduced risk of heart disease and stroke
- Stronger bones and improved balance
- Increased muscle strength and endurance
- Reduced body fat [7]

My Sleeping Heart Rate

A resting and sleeping heart rate is a good indicator of overall health, and I recorded my average sleeping (SHR) and resting (RHR) heart rate every 3 days from the past 21 days to better gauge my physical health improvements. This data was collected via Apple Watch.

• Days 1-3	SHR: 64	RHR: 81
• Days 4-6	SHR: 62	RHR: 75
• Days 7-9	SHR: 61	RHR: 68
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Walking for an hour a day reduces your risk of depression by

Walking reduces the risk of cardiovascular events by

31%

26%

68%

of students currently suffer from social isolation/loneliness due to the pandemic

How to Integrate Walking into Your life

- Start by setting a specific time when you will complete the task
- Create a music playlist

and reduces the risk of dying from an event by



• Days 10-12 SHR: 58 **RHR:** /1 • Days 13-15 SHR: 60 **RHR: 65** • Days 16-18 SHR: 52 **RHR: 66** • Days 19-21 SHR: 55 **RHR: 63**

> Mental health benefits

[3] • Self-perception and

self-esteem

- Mood and sleep quality
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Improves mood and fatigue [4]
- Can help to improve social relationships [4]

Barriers and Potential Solutions

Lack of walking paths Utilize hiking paths, or sidewalks through town Lack of time Break the walk up into shorter sections, such as three 10 minute walks Unfit or health problems

- that will make you look forward to walking
- Create a walking group with friends
- Have multiple routes to change up scenery
- Track your progress through a fitness tracker, or even a mood tracker as I did
- If there's a busy day, break it up into multiple shorter walks

Start somewhere! Even though 30 minutes is recommended any is better than none

It's boring

Create a walking group with friends, make a unique music playlist, or listen to a podcast [10]

Sources:

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[4] Laskowski, E. R. (2016, August 1). Walking Throughout Your Day Keeps Depression (and a Host of Other Health Problems) Away. Mayo Clinic Proceedings. https://www.mayoclinicproceedings.org/article/S0025-6196(16)30301-9/fulltext. [8] Mayo Clinic Staff. (2019, February 27). Walk your way to fitness. Mayo Clinic. https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/walking/art-20046261.

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My Experience

- Before beginning the 21-day challenge, I was very overwhelmed with school work, and had was unable to prioritize anything except school
- By committing to walk for a simple 30 minutes a day, it forced me to make the time to take care of my own physical and mental health.
- I experienced an improvement in my mental health, and also overall physical health
 - Based on watch recordings, my sleep also greatly improved, from longer hours to an overall more restful sleep
 - I felt less overwhelmed and stressed about school work having strictly set 30 minutes aside to complete this stress reliever