The Problem

In a study conducted by the JED Foundation, 63% of students have had suicidal thoughts in the past month. It was also found that 62% of students have anxiety, and 60% of students have a difficult time coping with stress. Mental health is a major issue for many students, and the current state of the world has made matters worse. I looked into the benefits of walking for 30 minutes a day and how it impacted my own personal overall health and mental well-being.

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 1 to 5. I recorded my average sleep (SHR and 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.

An investigation on the benefits of walking for thirty minutes a day on a person’s physical, mental and other aspects of overall health. Walking reduces the risk of dying from an event by 26%[1][2][5][6][7], and reduces the risk of cardiovascular events by 31%[3][4][5][6][7].

How to Integrate Walking into Your Life

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

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

Barriers and Potential Solutions

Lack of walking paths

Utilize hiking paths, or sidewalks

Lack of time

Break the walk up into shorter sections, such as three 10 minute walks

Unfit or health problems

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

Sources:

[10]The Problem

• Before beginning the 21-day challenge, I was very overwhelmed with school work, and school 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 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 out school work having strictly set 30 minutes aside to complete this stress reliever