

# Q.

What are the health benefits of walking?

# A.

Go for a walk. You've heard the advice before. Right?

But maybe you're wondering if walking can really improve your health. You know...if you walk around your neighborhood, on the treadmill or on the track...will it do anything?

Here's the thing. The average adult only walks 3,000 to 4,000 steps per day. Too many adults live a sedentary lifestyle without a lot of physical activity. It's a recipe for weight gain and chronic disease.

But it doesn't have to be that way. One of the easiest ways to improve your health...lace up your shoes and go for a walk.

Walk at least 30 minutes a day, and you'll be healthier and happier. If you don't have 30 minutes in your schedule, take a few 10-minute walk breaks, and you'll still reap the benefits. Research shows that regular walking can help:<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Reduce blood pressure

If your blood pressure is 120/80 or higher, you've got some work to do. About 1 out of 3 adults have elevated or high blood pressure. It's a risk factor for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. The good news: Walking helps reduce blood pressure.<sup>2</sup>



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## 2. Burn calories

Want to lose weight to improve your health? Skip the fad diets and supplements, gimmicky workouts, and made-for-TV exercise equipment. Instead, make better food choices and walk every day. Walking burns calories (about 200 to 300 per hour) and fat. This helps you lose weight.<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Lower cholesterol

Get a basic blood test, and one of the things your doctor will look at is your cholesterol levels. If this is high, it can clog your arteries, make them stiff, and raise the risk for a heart attack or stroke. Research shows brisk walking is an effective way to lower cholesterol.<sup>4</sup>

## 4. Improve mood

Ever have one of those days? You know, you're stressed out or feeling down about something. Medication, coffee, or a bowl of ice cream might help. But so can walking, and it doesn't have any negative side effects or calories. Research shows physical activity can improve your mood, reduce pain, and help you feel better.<sup>5</sup>

# ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

And those are just a few of the benefits you'll get from walking at least 30 minutes a day. Some research suggests a walk each day can also help curb food cravings, reduce joint pain, boost immune function, and help you live longer.<sup>6</sup>

Want to be healthier? Put on a pair of comfortable shoes, and go for a walk.

## References

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