



The Benefits of Walking and Jogging as Exercise

Prasad Salian¹, Dr. Hiremath², Dr. Ashok Kumar³,

¹Assistant Director of Physical Education & sports, Government Engineering College, Kushalnagara, Kodagu, Karnataka, India.

²Associate Professor of Physical Education, College of Horticulture, UHS Campus, Sirsi, India.

³Assistant Professor of Physical education, College of Horticulture, Bengaluru, India

Abstract: One of the reasons that walking and jogging is such a great type of exercise is that it is suitable for people of all fitness levels. Regular walking and jogging provides a function for well-conditioned people, whether it is to maintain cardiovascular fitness or to improve recovery. Walking and Jogging is a fantastic place to start for a beginner because the low-intensity nature of the activity makes it highly simple and accessible. Walking improves self-perception and self-esteem, mood and sleep quality, and it reduces stress, anxiety and fatigue. With all these reasons, why wouldn't you want to start walking.

Keywords: Walking, Jogging, Exercises, Fitness and Health.

I. Introduction

Walking is one of the easiest activities you can do. Unlike many sports such as running, walking is low impact on your body, requires minimal equipment, and can be done at any time of day at your own pace. Not only is walking simple to do, but regular, brisk 30-minute walks can help to increase lung capacity. This also strengthens the lungs. With increased lung capacity, you will breathe easier, and your lungs will stay healthier for longer. Walking is a great way to improve or maintain your overall health. Just 30 minutes every day can increase cardiovascular fitness, strengthen bones, reduce excess body fat, and boost muscle power and endurance. But it isn't just great for your body.

Walking and jogging are both excellent forms of cardiovascular exercise. Neither is necessarily "better" than the other. The choice that's best for you depends entirely on your fitness and health goals. If you're looking to burn more calories or lose weight fast, running is a better choice. But walking can also offer numerous benefits for your health, including helping you maintain a healthy weight. The benefits of physical activity and exercise have been recognized for as long as man has been around. Our first ancestors didn't think they were exercising. For them, it was more like chasing their next meal to survive instead of chasing a ball to win a game or going for a leisurely stroll. Regardless, in order to survive, they had to be actively engaged in

moderate levels of physical activity either through hunting or gathering foods for their sustenance. In other words: no exercise, no food; no food, death. How's that for a health benefit.

II. Review and Related Literature

The Greek physician Herodicus in fourth century B.C. recognized the importance of exercise. He practiced gymnastic medicine, a branch of Greek medicine that relied on vigorous exercise as a treatment.¹ Hippocrates also agreed, "if we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health."¹ The Jewish philosopher Rabbi Moses ben Maimon of the 12th century, a physician to the Sultan of Egypt, stated, "Anyone who lives a sedentary life and does not exercise...even he eats good and takes care of himself according to proper medical principles-all his days will be painful ones and his strength will wane."¹ Robert Burton, a theologian and scholar also saw the benefits of an active lifestyle and stated in his book *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, "Opposite to exercise is Idleness or want of exercise, the bane of body and minde...one of the seven deadly sinnes, and sole cause of Melancholy. 1 (1632) Heironymus Mercurialis (from the 16th century) defined exercise, a definition that has changed little since the 16th century, "exercise is the deliberate and planned movement of the human frame, accompanied by breathlessness, and undertaken for the sake of health or fitness.

Beyond the physical health benefits, there are affective benefits associated with group games and activities. Ancient Mayans organized the first team game called the Ball Game. It consisted of two teams trying to get a ball through a hoop mounted about 23 feet on a wall. The rules were to get the ball through the hoop using certain parts of the body. In some cases the captain of the losing team gave himself as a human sacrifice to the winning team, an act that was believed by the Mayans to be a vital part of prosperity.

American Indians are thought to be the founder of the modern game of lacrosse as well as other stick games. In general, Lacrosse (which received its name from French settlers) was perceived as a cultural event. The game was sometimes used to settle disputes between tribes, victory and choosing teams was thought to be controlled supernaturally, and games and equipment were prepared ritualistically.

From Ancient History to Modern Times

In retrospect, the perceived benefits of exercise have changed very little since Herodicus or the American Indians. Mounting research continues to support early thoughts that exercise is vital to human quality of life. Culturally, sport plays a huge role in growth and development of youth and adults. Physically, there is indisputable evidence associated with the short and long-term benefits of regular exercise to brain, heart, bone, muscular, and emotional health, and reductions in risk for chronic disease such as cancer, diabetes, and obesity.

Physical activity is defined as any movement carried out by skeletal muscle that requires energy and is focused on building health. Health improvements would be seen as improved blood pressure, blood-lipid profile, and heart health. Acceptable physical activity includes things like yard work, house cleaning, walking the dog, or taking the steps instead of the elevator. Physical activity does not have to be done all at once. It can be accumulated through various activities throughout the day. Although typing on a phone or laptop or

playing video games does require skeletal muscle and a minimal amount of energy, the amount required isn't sufficient to improve health.

Despite the common knowledge that physical activity is tremendously beneficial for health, rates of activity continue to be below what is needed. According to the CDC, only 1 in 5 (21%) of American adults meet the recommended physical activity guidelines from the Surgeon General. Less than 3 in 10 high school students get 60 minutes or more of physical activity per day. Non-Hispanic whites (26%) are more active than their Hispanic (16%) and Black counterparts (18%) as is the case for males (54%) and females (46%). Those with more education and those whose household income is higher than poverty level are more likely to be physically active.

Exercise, although often used interchangeably with physical activity, is a sub-category of physical activity. Exercise is a planned, structured and repetitive movement pattern intended to improve fitness. As a positive side effect, it also significantly improves health as well. Fitness improvements would be seen as the heart's ability to pump blood, increased muscle size and flexibility. For the most part, walking and jogging in this text is viewed in the context of exercise.

The Role of Walking and Jogging

Walking and jogging can play a major role in increasing these activity rates. Why? One of the beauties of walking or jogging comes from their simplicity. For example, the basic requirements to begin a walking program include: shoes, clothing, and a place to walk. For most, these items are readily available. In other words, the excuse of cost and/or accessibility is simply not a good one.

If you are wanting to be competitive and not a just-for-fun kind of runner, there's no problem with the availability of races. One of the fastest growing race distances, the half marathon, continues to grow with 1.8 million finishers in 2012 for the 13.1 mile event. The most popular events, 5k's, included 6.2 million finishers. Marathoners dropped slightly from 2011-2012 to 478 thousand finishers of the 26.2 mile events. The number of resources available to runners has also increased with more and more online training programs, many of which are free.

In addition to the growth of half marathons and marathons, 10k's and 5k's have become easy ways for many organizations to raise funds for a particular cause. As a result, these local weekend events can be found by the dozens in many areas of the country. For example, Rungeorgia.com advertises a race calendar for the entire state of Georgia. On any given weekend, anywhere from 5 to 30 events are posted. Many of which carry low registration costs, short travel, and raise funds for good causes. In addition to the old fashioned 5k and 10k, many "new-age" events have emerged with similar distances but that also include challenging obstacles and other elements of fun such as colour-runs or glow-in the-dark runs. In other words, accessibility to events is rarely an excuse.

Walking generally attracts a less competitive group although many clubs and organizations exist to support competitive race walking, a sport included in the summer Olympic Games. Not all finishers of marathons are

actually runners. Many are full-distance walkers. Regardless, most walkers are walking for fitness or social enjoyment and not for competition so recommendations in this text primarily adhere to that non-competitive approach.

Health Benefits

Walking and jogging are considered aerobic exercise—a type of exercise that requires oxygen -- more frequently referred to as simply “cardio.” Both walking and jogging not only improve health but also increase fitness levels. The health benefits of aerobic exercise have been well documented since Dr. Kenneth Cooper wrote the book *Aerobics* in the early 60’s.

People, in general, exercise for many reasons. Ironically, most reasons lack a specific focus on the health benefits. While that’s not a problem, per se, it’s still important to remember health as the main objective. Nonetheless, the exact reasons vary between genders and ages but include:

Females	Males	
1.	Weight Control	Muscle tone
2.	Feel good after	Increased energy
3.	Increased energy	Cardiovascular benefits
4.	Muscle tone	Weight control
5.	Cardiovascular benefits	Feel good after
6.	Keep flexibility	Reduce stress
7.	Reduce stress	Build strength
8.	Time for self	Enjoy exercise
9.	Enjoy exercise	Keep flexibility
10.	Improve self esteem	Time for self

Cardiovascular Health Benefits

While the exact details vary for how much exercise is required and at what intensity is most beneficial, little doubt exists as to whether or not exercise will significantly reduce risks of cardiovascular disease. Fit

individuals, male or female, are much less likely to die from coronary artery disease as well as cerebrovascular disease (stroke). Current research suggests “more is better,” in terms of cumulative energy expenditure, with the most pronounced change in risk seen with moderate levels of activity. Specific adaptations to the cardiovascular system that occur as a result of exercise will be discussed in a later chapter.

Obesity:

Obesity has become an epidemic in the modern world with nearly 70% of all Americans being considered overweight based on body mass index measurements. Unfortunately, only about 21% of adults 18 and older engaged in regular physical activity according to the Center for Disease Control.

Clearly, the more calories you burn during exercise the easier it will be easier to prevent becoming overweight or obese. Walking and jogging, especially at high intensities require significant energy demands and have been shown to reduce body weight if performed consistently over several weeks. Not only do you burn extra calories during the exercise, but metabolic rate remains elevated for up to 24 hours after exercise burning additional calories.

Exercise has not only been used as prevention for CVD and weight management but also as a treatment strategy after diagnosis. In addition to CVD and obesity, regular aerobic exercise may also help prevent:

- Diabetes (Type 2, gestational)
- High cholesterol
- Cancer of the breasts, prostate and colon and rectum
- Arthritis
- Delay the onset of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease
- Osteoporosis
- Kidney Disease
- Improves immune system function

In addition to the preventive benefits, it can be used to treat:

- Heart disease
- Asthma
- COPD
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hyperlipidemia

- Multiple sclerosis
- Arthritis • Depression
- Anxiety disorder
- Improves academic performance

Clearly, Hippocrates was correct in his statement that regular exercise is “the safest way to health.”

III. Conclusion

There are many ways to improve physical and emotional health, and the activities in this collection only include a small number of possibilities. We hope you will want to explore and keep moving forward in different ways toward mind and body wellness. Keeping a log of your walking or other activity for wellness during the next week can be well worth the effort. Are you willing to make a few notes about your experiences with walking and jogging for wellness for at least 3 days during the everyday life.

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