

If you've been paying any attention to the media at all over the last ten years you've probably heard a lot about the benefits of exercise. There's a good chance you've seen one of several current TV shows centered around exercise programs like Big Loser. You've probably watched people running marathons or listened to an Olympic athlete describing their training regimen.

Luckily for you, it doesn't take an intense workout routine to increase your productivity and health. In fact, ten minutes a day can make a big difference in your overall health--and boost your productivity more than any energy drink.

The Dangers of Sitting

Magazine headlines all over the world have talked about the dangers of sitting too much. If you've seen the headlines but skipped the articles, it's time to start paying attention.

The average person today spends 15 hours every day sitting. The lack of muscle movement alters your metabolism, which then produces signals associated with cancer. A lack of exercise can also lead to obesity and all the problems associated with that.

Spending all or most of those 15 hours a day in front of your computer can also cause eye strain and Repetitive Strain Injury. Eye strain is unpleasant in the short term; RSI, most commonly manifested as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, can be a life long problem and even require surgery.

The Benefits of Walking

You can alleviate the dangers of sitting by incorporating a short walk in your daily routine, ideally on your work break. Even a ten or fifteen minute walk every day can significantly reduce your risk for heart disease or cancer.

In 2013 cognitive psychologist Lorenza Colzato from Leiden University performed a [study](#) and discovered that people who walked or rode their bikes 3-5 times a week were able to think more creatively than their sedentary counterparts. Every self-help book and business magazine will tell you creativity is one of the most important factors to success, and odds are it's a big factor in your productivity at work too--so get walking.

Better yet, the [British Journal of Sports Journalism](#) discovered these effects to be completely independent of mood. In other words, no matter how bad your day is, a walk can help you find a creative solution--or at least think of something interesting to do while you figure things out.

Why Does Walking Help?

Going for a walk is helpful for all the reasons you've probably heard--improved fitness, fresh air and an endorphin boost--and a few more. In today's world where everybody is constantly

attached to their computer, phone or other device and rarely away from social media for more than an hour, your daily walk provides important mental downtime.

We are conditioned to believe that only hours spent actively working are productive, but this is actually pretty far from the truth. When we turn our attention away from a given task and lean back to relax, our brain doesn't stop working. It uses the downtime to replenish stores of the chemicals that give you focus and energy to continue working.

Research today shows that when you're resting, an entirely different part of your brain is at work than when you're focused on your own work. This is called the [default mode network](#) and its processes allow us to think more creatively and to reflect on our understanding of ourselves, the world and humanity.

A ten minute walk allows you to get both physical exercise and the mental downtime your brain requires to properly process information.

How to Walk More

Of course, everybody's busy these days. You don't have time for the half hour daily walk recommended by some people. Your boss won't let you take the five minute activity break some people recommend you take [every hour](#). Frankly, you're not convinced that's what you need, but you know you need some more walking in your life.

Adding even the shortest walk to your daily routine can make a big difference. Do you take public transit? Walk to the next bus stop instead of waiting at the closest one. If you drive, park your car at the other end of the lot. Choose to use the subway exit further from your work to get an extra block in. Make your lunch smaller to give yourself time to walk after you eat.

Find a way to fit ten minutes of walking into your schedule every day and you'll soon notice yourself growing happier and more creative. Once you've noticed the small changes ten minutes a day can make you'll discover that walking might just be worth your time after all.