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Step Into May - The Surprising Power of Walking



May is National Walking Month, and there's never been a better time to lace up your shoes and head outside. Walking is one of the simplest, most accessible forms of exercise available to us - no gym membership, no special equipment, no experience required. Just you, a pair of comfortable shoes, and a little time.

But don't let its simplicity fool you. The benefits of regular walking are backed by decades of research, and they go far beyond burning a few extra calories.

What Walking Does for Your Body

It keeps your heart healthy: Walking briskly for just 30 minutes a day can reduce your risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure and improve circulation. You don't need to break into a sweat - a purposeful, steady pace is enough to make a real difference over time.

It supports a healthy weight: Regular walking helps regulate metabolism and burn calories in a sustainable, low-impact way. Unlike intense exercise, it's something most people can do consistently - and consistency is what delivers results.

It strengthens muscles and joints: Walking is particularly good for your legs, hips and core. It also helps maintain bone density as we age, reducing the risk of osteoporosis. For anyone managing joint pain or recovering from injury, it's often one of the first exercises a physiotherapist will recommend.

It boosts your immune system: Studies show that people who walk regularly take fewer sick days and recover faster from illness. Even a 20-minute walk can have a measurable effect on immune function.

Did you know? The NHS recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. A 30-minute walk five days a week gets you there – and it counts.

What Walking Does for Your Mind

It reduces stress and anxiety: Walking (especially outdoors) - lowers cortisol levels, the hormone associated with stress. Even a short walk during a busy day can help you feel calmer, clearer and more in control.

It lifts your mood: Physical movement triggers the release of endorphins and serotonin – the brain's natural mood boosters. Many people find that a walk is one of the most effective tools they have for shifting a low mood or breaking a cycle of negative thinking.

It improves focus and creativity: Research from Stanford University found that walking increases creative output by up to 81%. If you're feeling stuck on a problem, a walk is often the best thing you can do. It's not procrastination - it's productive thinking.

It helps you sleep better: Regular walkers tend to fall asleep faster and sleep more deeply. If you struggle with sleep, building a daily walk into your routine - particularly in natural daylight can make a meaningful difference within just a few weeks.

Feeling overwhelmed or anxious? Even a 10-minute walk outside can help reset your nervous system. Start small and build from there.



Making It Work for You

The best walk is the one you actually do. Here are a few simple ways to build more walking into your day:

- **Swap one car journey a week for a walk** - even just to the shops or a nearby appointment.
- **Take your lunch break outside** - a 20-minute lunchtime walk does wonders for afternoon focus.
- **Walk and talk** - turn a phone call into a walking meeting.
- **Set a daily step goal** - 7,000 to 10,000 steps is a great target for most adults.
- **Find a walking buddy** - it's more enjoyable and keeps you accountable

You don't need to carve out a dedicated hour. Small, consistent habits add up quickly.

This May, Make It Count

National Walking Month is a great moment to start - or restart a habit that will serve you for life. Whether it's a stroll through the park, a walk to work, or an evening wander with the family, every step counts.

Your body and your mind will thank you for it.



How can Doctor Care Anywhere help



24/7 GP and ACP Appointments

- Same-day virtual consultations.
- Instant access to medical advice, prescriptions, and fit notes.
- Available anytime, from home, the office, or on the go.



Mental Health Services

- Confidential sessions with mental health practitioners.
- Early intervention for anxiety, stress, and low mood.
- Assessment, treatment and support, including access to therapy and digital health tools.



Tailored Physiotherapy Support

- Virtual assessments and recovery plans for musculoskeletal concerns.
- Clinician-led support for pain, injuries, and posture-related issues.
- Expert assessment, diagnosis and treatment plans to aid recovery and prevent long-term issues.

