

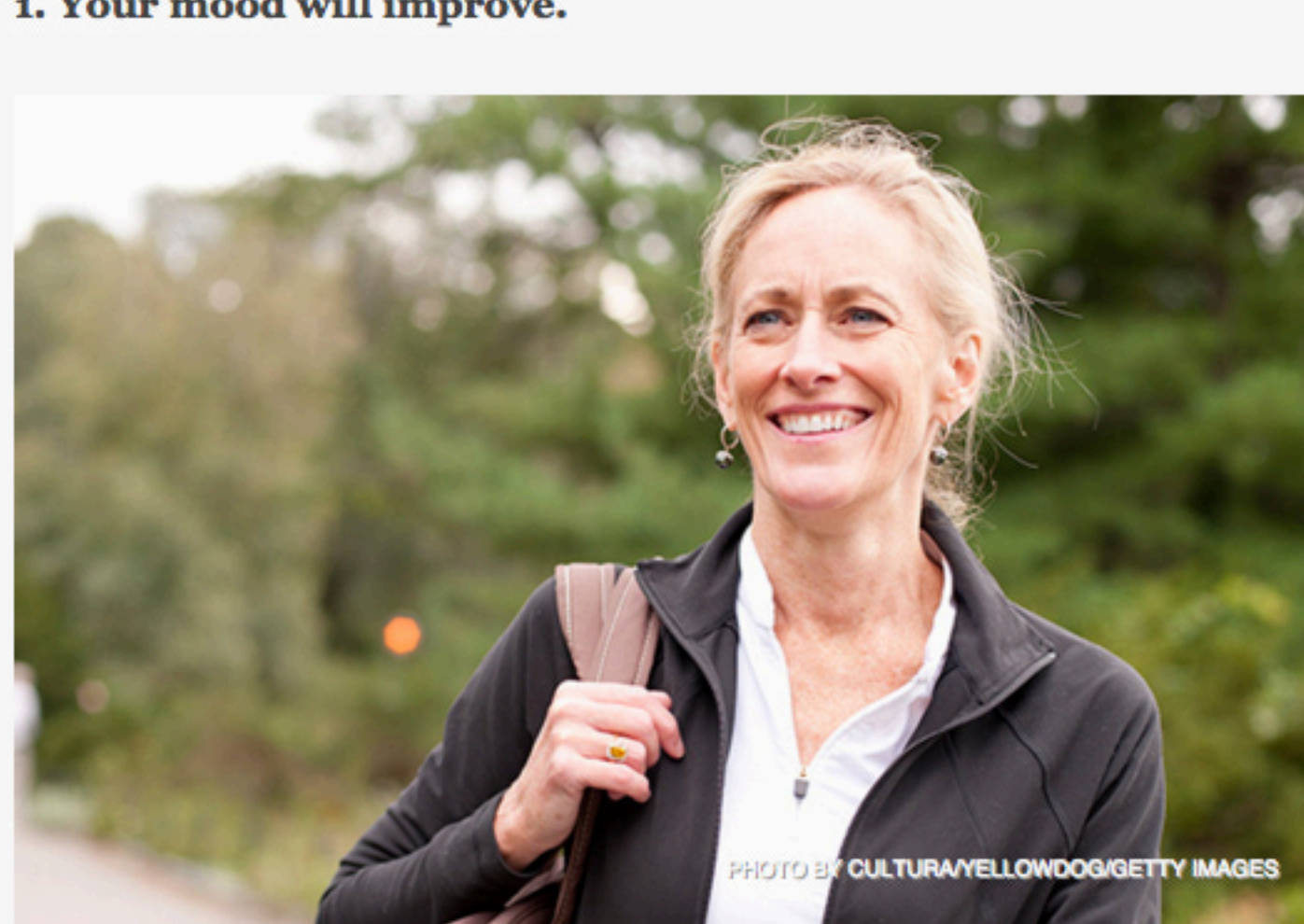
The Incredible Results You Get From Walking 30 Minutes A Day

NOVEMBER 3, 2015 By MEGHAN RABBITT



Taking a walk a day is kind of like that proverbial apple: There's a good chance it'll keep the doctor away. From helping you lose weight and de-stress to lowering your blood pressure and reducing your risk of many chronic diseases—going for regular walks is one of the best and easiest things you can do for your health, says Melina B. Jampolis, MD, author of the new book *The Doctor on Demand Diet*. (Try one of these [3 new walking workouts that blast fat and help you lose weight](#).) "Walking is the No. 1 exercise I recommend to most of my patients because it is very easy to do, requires nothing but a pair of tennis shoes, and has tremendous mental and physical benefits," she says. Here's what you can expect when you start walking for just 30 minutes every day, most days of the week:

1. Your mood will improve.



You know how sometimes, it takes a glass of wine or a square (or three) of dark chocolate to blunt the edge of a rough day? Well, going for a walk is a zero-calorie strategy with the same benefits, says Jampolis. "Research shows that regular walking actually modifies your nervous system so much that you'll experience a decrease in anger and hostility," she says. What's more, when you make your walks social—you stride with, say, your partner, a neighbor, or a good friend—that interaction helps you feel connected, says Jampolis, which boosts mood. Finally, walking outdoors exposes you to natural sunlight, which can help stave off Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)—a potential antidote for the winter blues, says Jampolis.

2. Your creative juices will start flowing.

Whether you're feeling stuck on a big brainstorm for work or you've been searching for a solution to a tricky problem, research shows it's a good idea to get moving: According to a 2014 study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology, Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, going for a walk can spark creativity. "Researchers administered creative-thinking tests to subjects while seated and while walking and found that the walkers thought more creatively than the sitters," says Jampolis. (Make 2016 YOUR year! [Order Prevention's calendar](#) and get daily inspiration to live your best life.)

3. Your jeans will get a little looser.



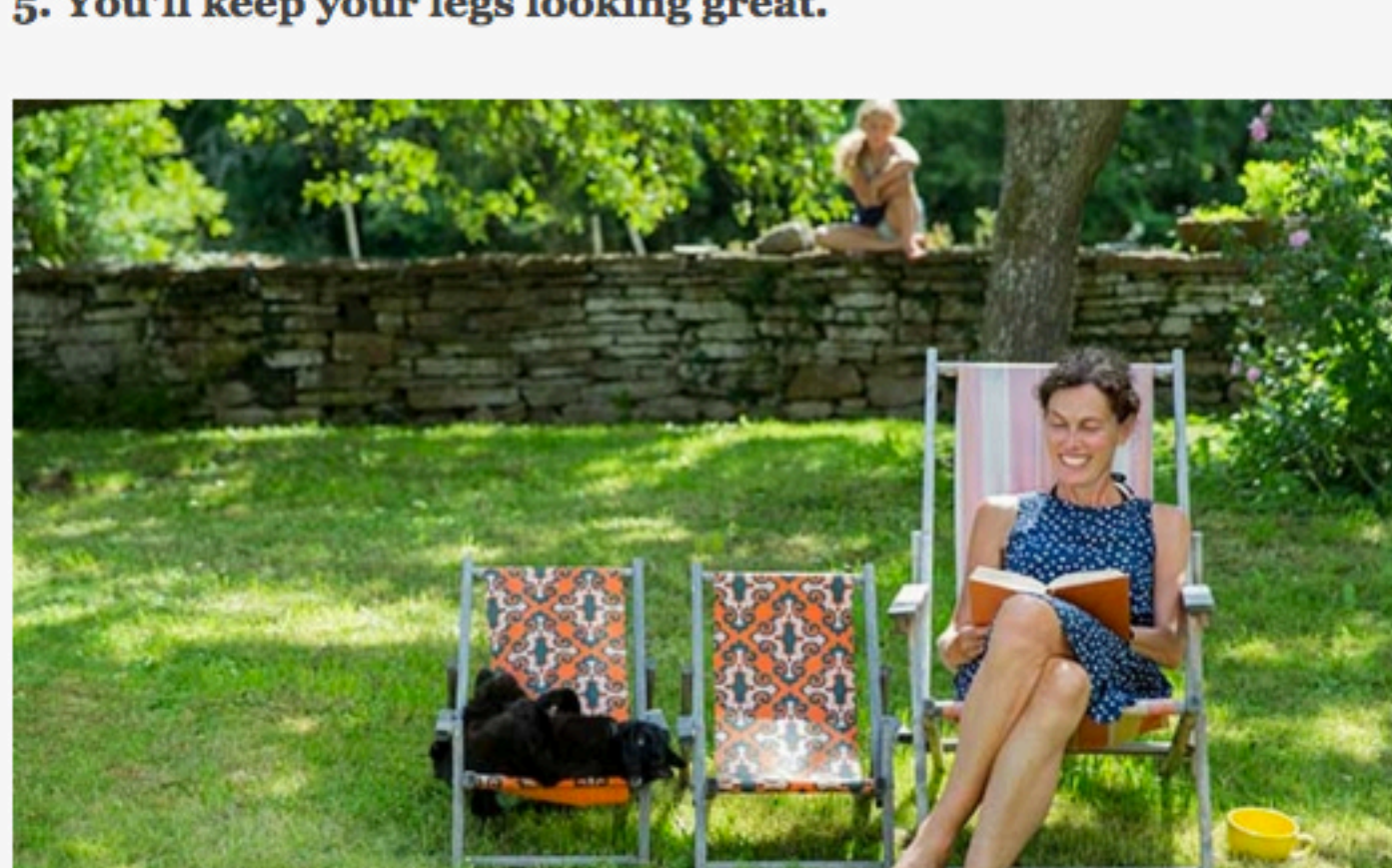
This one may seem obvious, but it's certainly a happy benefit for those who start walking regularly, says Jampolis. "As you continue to walk, you may notice your pants begin to fit more loosely around your mid-section, even if the number on the scale isn't moving much," she says. "That's because regular walking can help improve your body's response to insulin, which can help reduce [belly fat](#)." Ariel Iasevoli, a personal trainer at Crunch gyms in New York City, adds that walking every day is one of the most effective low-impact ways to mobilize fat and positively alter body composition. "Daily walking increases metabolism by burning extra calories *and* by preventing muscle loss, which is particularly important as we get older," says Iasevoli. The best part? You don't have to slog it out on a treadmill at the gym to see these benefits. "One of my clients reduced her body fat by two percent in just one month by walking home from work each day, which was just under a mile," she says.

4. You'll slash your risk of chronic disease.

The statistics are impressive: The American Diabetes Association says walking lowers your blood [sugar levels](#) and your overall risk for diabetes. Researchers at the University of Boulder Colorado and the University of Tennessee found that regular walking [lowered blood pressure](#) by as much as 11 points and may reduce the risk of stroke by 20% to 40%. One of the most cited studies on walking and health, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2002, found that those who walked enough to meet physical activity guidelines (30 or more minutes of moderate activity on 5 or more days per week) had a 30% lower risk of cardiovascular disease compared with those who did not walk regularly. "The physical benefits of walking are well documented," says Scott Danberg, director of fitness at [Pritikin Longevity Center + Spa](#) in Miami.

With impressive results like these, there's a good chance you'll get a pat on the back by your doc at your next checkup.

5. You'll keep your legs looking great.



As we age, our risk of unsightly varicose veins increases—it's just not fair. However, walking is a proven way to prevent those unsightly lines from developing, says Luis Navarro, MD, founder and director of [The Vein Treatment Center](#) in New York City. "The venous system includes a circulatory section known as 'the second heart,' which is formed by muscles, veins, and valves located in our calf and foot," he explains. "This system works to push blood back up to the heart and lungs—and walking strengthens this secondary circulatory system by strengthening and preserving leg muscle, which boosts healthy blood flow." If you already suffer from varicose veins, walking daily can help ease related swelling and restlessness in your legs, says Navarro. "Also, if you are genetically predisposed to have varicose and/or spider veins, walking daily can help delay the onset."

6. You'll start to get more "regular."

If you currently praise [coffee](#) for keeping your digestive system going strong, get ready to start thanking your morning walk instead. That's because a regular walking routine can greatly improve gastric mobility, says Tara Alaichamy, DPT, a physical therapist at Cancer Treatment Centers of America. "One of the very first requirements an abdominal surgery patient is required to do is to walk because it utilizes core and abdominal muscles, encouraging movement in our GI system," she says. (Check out these [7 things your poop says about your health](#).)

7. Your other goals will start to seem more reachable.

When you become a regular walker, you will have established a regular routine—and when you have a routine, you are more likely to continue with the activity *and* take on new healthy behaviors. "I firmly believe that walking regularly can help you to accomplish other goals you set your mind to," says Kim Evans, a personal trainer and daily walker.