

Walking Faster Can Boost Lifespan and Heart Health

An analysis of low-income and Black individuals confirmed significant health benefits from just 15 minutes of fast walking per day.

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Walking fast for just 15 minutes per day can significantly reduce the risk of death, especially due to [heart disease](#), according to a new study focused primarily on low-income and Black Americans in the South, [Science Daily reports](#).

According to the current [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#), adults need 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week to support physical and mental health. Regular [walking](#) is widely encouraged for its significant health benefits, including improved cardiovascular health, cognitive function, weight management and reduced risk of chronic diseases.

“While the health benefits of daily walking are well established, limited research has investigated the effects of factors such as walking pace on mortality, particularly in low-income and Black/African American populations,” said lead study investigator Wei Zheng, MD, PhD, an epidemiologist at Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center.

Findings published in the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#) confirm the benefits of walking at a fast pace within this underrepresented cohort.

“Our research has shown that fast walking as little as 15 minutes a day was associated with a nearly 20% reduction in total mortality, while a smaller reduction in mortality was found in association with more than three hours of daily slow walking,” Zheng said. “This benefit remained strong even after accounting for other lifestyle factors and was consistent across various sensitivity analyses.”

The study involved nearly 80,000 predominantly low-income and Black individuals across 12 southeastern states. Participants reported the average amount of time per day they spent walking

slowly (moving around, walking at work, walking the dog, engaging in light exercise) and walking fast (such as climbing stairs, brisk walking, exercising).

Participants engaging in fast walking saw the greatest improvements in cardiovascular health. In fact, fast walking helped increase oxygen delivery to the heart, which boosts heart efficiency, and manage [cardiovascular](#) risk factors, including [obesity](#) and [high blood pressure](#).

Additionally, researchers emphasize that walking at a brisk pace is a highly accessible, convenient and low-impact activity suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels.

“Public health campaigns and community-based programs can emphasize the importance and availability of fast walking to improve health outcomes, providing resources and support to facilitate increased fast walking within all communities,” said study lead author Lili Liu, MPH. “Furthermore, the findings of the reduced mortality associated with fast walking pace were supported by previous studies conducted in middle- and upper-middle-income populations. Individuals should strive to incorporate more intense physical activity into their routines, such as brisk walking or other forms of aerobic exercise.”