

Heart health danger highlighted as global survey finds one in four people report not knowing how much they walk each day

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More than a quarter of people who took part in a new multi-country survey said they did not know how much time they spent briskly walking at a speed faster than normal. As the World Health Organization reports that global levels of physical activity are declining, the six country survey reveals that between 14 and 37 per cent of adults don't pay any attention to one of the simplest things most of us can do to protect our heart health – walking.

On World Heart Day, 29 September, the World Heart Federation is calling on men, women and children of all [age groups](#) to increase their physical activity in order to protect their heart health and reduce the [risk of cardiovascular disease](#) (CVD), including heart disease and stroke.

Dr Kathryn Taubert, Chief Science Officer, World Heart Federation, said: "Awareness is the first step to a [healthy heart](#). Paying attention to how much we walk should be as simple as watching what we eat. On World Heart Day, we are urging people to take action to protect their hearts. By reaching the recommended guideline of minimum 30 minutes of moderate exercise, which includes brisk walking at least five days a week, many [premature deaths](#) can be prevented."

The new multi-[national survey](#) conducted in Brazil, China, India, Spain, UK and USA by the World Heart Federation reveals that:

- Around one in three adults in the US and UK are not aware of how much they walk each day compared to only one in six people in India
- Overall, in the six countries that were surveyed, 55 per cent of people who reported times, do less than 30 minutes of brisk walking on a typical day
- People in the US and UK reported that they do less brisk walking than those in [developing nations](#) – two thirds of respondents in the US and UK who reported their walking times do less than 30 minutes of brisk walking, on a typical day, whereas less than half of adults in Brazil and India do the same.

In an age of smartphones and fitness tracking devices, it has never been easier to keep track of personal fitness. Studies have shown that people who wear pedometers increase their physical activity by almost 27 per cent.

In celebration of this year's World Heart Day on 29 September, the World Heart Federation and Bupa, a leading international healthcare group, are launching a new global challenge and free walking app, to encourage people to get walking and keep walking. Entitled Ground Miles, the challenge will help to motivate people to take care of their [heart health](#), while the app provides them with a tool to count the distance that they walk and reach their physical activity goals.

Johanna Ralston, CEO, World Heart Federation said: "We want to get people around the world walking, to reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke. Our goal is to encourage people to collectively walk 5 million miles (8 million kilometres) by the end of this year."

Awareness around CVD risk factors such as physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, overweight/obesity and tobacco use is the first stage

towards preventing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Regular moderate exercise – such as walking, cycling, or participating in sports – has many health benefits for the heart. Walking in particular is one of the least expensive and most broadly accessible forms of [physical activity](#) in the world. By reaching the recommended goal of minimum 30 minutes a day, five times a week of moderate exercise, the World Heart Federation says people can:

- Increase life expectancy – even 15 minutes a day of [moderate exercise](#) (which includes brisk walking) can have significant health benefits, adding up to three years to life expectancy
- Significantly reduce the risk of CVD – studies have shown reductions as high as 11 per cent
- Burn more fat than jogging – running an hour per day reduces the risk of heart disease by nearly five per cent; however people who expended the same amount of energy walking per day can reduce the risk of [heart disease](#) by more than nine per cent.

"Your feet can carry your heart very far in life", summarised Dr Srinath Reddy, President, World Heart Federation.

More information: Harvard School of Public Health, Physical Activity; [www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-p...ctivity-and-obesity/](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-reduction/physical-activity-and-obesity/)

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Provided by World Heart Federation

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