



Walk and talk

A walking meeting is simply that, a meeting that takes place during a walk.

Walk and talk meetings have obvious benefits. Too much sitting is associated with higher mortality rates and with the development of chronic health conditions, such as diabetes.

Australian's are sedentary for 50 – 70% of their waking hours, or 8 – 12 hours per day. Workers who exchange one traditional seated meeting for a walking meeting, increase their work-related physical activity by an average of 10 minutes, but research shows that the benefits are not only physical. The act of walking leads to increases in creative thinking, cognitive engagement and focus.

Tips for organising walking meetings:

- ▶ Plan your route for the length of the meeting e.g. 15, 30 or 60 minute walking routes.
- ▶ Walking meetings work best in smaller groups (two or three people is ideal).
- ▶ Let participants know about the walking meeting in advance so they come prepared (comfortable shoes, a hat, etc)
- ▶ Pick a suitable walking route for all fitness levels. Use quieter streets, a local park, perhaps include a coffee stop (but avoid the high calorie muffin or cake).
- ▶ Walk at a comfortable pace so that everyone is included and can hear each other.
- ▶ At the end of the meeting, note contents of discussion and follow-up actions.



Is being healthy contagious?

Growing evidence suggests that health habits spread through social networks.

Think about your five closest friends. Do they love the gym? Walks on the beach? Maybe they smoke, or are overweight? Friends can really make a difference in our lives.

Researchers at Deakin University's Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition surveyed 3610 Victorian women and found that they were most likely to follow the eating and physical activity behaviours of those around them.

The study considered the impact of social norms on physical activity and eating behaviours, including consumption of fast food, soft drink and fruit and vegetables. It found that women who spent time around

healthy peers were more likely to also eat well and exercise.

Larger studies that have been conducted in the US have also shown strong trends including, if your significant other quits smoking you have a 67% decreased chance of taking up the habit. Conversely, if you have a close friend who becomes obese, your chance of becoming obese doubles. The research also confirms what we have always suspected, your chances of becoming happier increases if you are surrounded by happier people.

These results suggest that healthy living could be contagious.

Obtaining the fullest possible benefits of your social network while avoiding its pitfalls involves three key areas of skill:

1. Learning how to recognise when your own behavior is being negatively shaped.
2. Developing your ability to deliberately make better choices under pressure.
3. Seizing opportunities to gently and patiently nudge your network in healthier directions.



Bliss Balls

Bliss balls are a great snack idea to give you a boost of energy or a nutritious way to satisfy your sweet tooth. Try these bliss ball recipes which don't take long to prepare and do not require any baking.

Cookie dough balls

- ▶ 2 cups rolled oats
- ▶ 10 medjool dates
- ▶ 5 tablespoons water
- ▶ 3 tablespoons shredded coconut
- ▶ 2 tablespoons cacao nibs
- ▶ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ▶ pinch sea salt to taste

Ingredients:

Blend oats in a high speed blender or food processor until you get a fine consistency like flour.

Add in the shredded coconut and vanilla extract.

Slowly add in dates and water (you may have to do this in 2 batches).

Remove the dough from the blender and fold in the cacao nibs.

Scoop out mixture, roll into balls and store in refrigerator or freezer.

Notes

If you're not using fresh soft dates, soak them in warm water for at least an hour before.

Replace 1 cup of rolled oats for cashews for more of a cookie dough taste.

Pear and apple oat balls

- ▶ 2 cups oats
- ▶ 50g macadamia nuts, or almond meal (optional)
- ▶ 1 tsp chia seeds (optional)
- ▶ 3 tsp water
- ▶ 1 cup dried apples, chopped
- ▶ 1 pear, peeled and diced
- ▶ ½ cup desiccated coconut plus extra for rolling
- ▶ 1 tsp maple syrup

Ingredients:

Heat a frying pan, add the oats and toast for a few minutes, stirring continually. Once lightly toasted, remove from the pan and set aside.

In a small bowl combine the chia seeds and water and leave to soak.

Place the macadamia nuts into a food processor and blend until it resembles a fine consistency.

Add the dried apple and coconut and mix to combine.

Add the toasted oats, chopped pear, chia seeds and maple syrup and process until well combined.

Roll the mixture into teaspoon sized balls and then roll in extra coconut.

Store in the fridge for up to 3 days, or freeze for a great snack on the go.

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