

Fun Fact of the Week

Top 10 Health Benefits of Hiking*

Next time you hear someone tell you to “take a hike,” you might want to thank them for looking out for your health. That’s because going on a hike offers tremendous benefits for your physical and mental health and well-being. Here are the Top 10 from Health Fitness Revolution and author of the book [ReSYNC Your Life Samir Becic](#).



- **Increases fitness:** Just one hour of trekking can burn well over 500 calories, depending on the level of incline and the weight of the pack you’re carrying. Hiking trails are often softer on joints than asphalt or concrete, so it’s easier on your ankles and knees compared to running. If you head for the hills, weight loss results are even better. Not only are you burning serious calories, but altitude itself has also proven to be a weight loss ally.
- **Take control of your workouts:** With hiking, you can chart your own course: Is it a slowly inclining scenic trail or a steep trek up a mountain? And you set your own pace and distance, as well. Whether you decide on an afternoon hike, a weekend in the woods, or a long distance experience, you aren’t listening to a bossy fitness trainer tell you to work harder.
- **Tones the whole body:** Regular walking can get your butt in better shape, but taking on sharp inclines, using trekking poles to propel you forward, and clambering over rocks gives your body an all-over workout. Physiologically, you’re going to work your whole body, especially the lower body — namely the quads, glutes and hamstrings. If you’re carrying a pack, then you’re going to challenge the strength and endurance of your upper body as well.
- **Helps prevent and control diabetes:** Regular hiking helps you control, or even prevent, diabetes by lowering your blood sugar levels. Hiking gives your muscles a workout, which moves glucose from your bloodstream for energy.
- **Lower blood pressure and cholesterol:** Hiking through the trails on a regular basis decreases blood pressure and cholesterol, thus reducing the danger of heart disease, diabetes, and stroke for those at high-risk. In fact, hiking downhill is two times more effective at removing blood sugars and improving glucose tolerance.
- **Hiking heals:** Some research suggests that the physical benefits of hiking extend far beyond cardiovascular health, and may even help cancer patients recover. A study published in the International Journal of Sports Medicine found that long-distance hiking trips may improve the antioxidative capacity, which helps fight off disease, in the blood of oncological patients. Another

study showed that breast cancer survivors who exercised regularly — many in the form of hiking — believed that physical activity complemented their recovery from cancer treatment.

- **Is a social activity:** Hikers always recommend using the buddy system. A regular weekend meet-up or a planned long-distance trek can help you forge bonds while you shape up. Plus, interaction with the larger hiking community encourages you to engage with your workout as a lifestyle, rather than a chore, which will make you more likely to stick with it for the long haul.
- **Increase creativity:** Research shows that spending time outdoors increases attention spans and creative problem-solving skills by as much as 50 percent. The authors of the study also point out that the results may have as much to do with unplugging from technology as they do spending time outside. Researchers from Stanford University's Graduate School of Education also found that walking gets the creative juices flowing far more than sitting.
- **Increase happiness levels and curb depression:** Research shows that using hiking as an additional therapy can help people with severe depression. It may even inspire those suffering to lead a more active lifestyle.
- **Commune with nature:** Being out in nature, away from the chaos of our daily lives and technology, can allow people to connect with themselves and nature in a way that brings about peace and a sense of well-being.

[*https://www.healthfitnessrevolution.com/top-10-health-benefits-hiking/](https://www.healthfitnessrevolution.com/top-10-health-benefits-hiking/)