

[IMAGE]

Walk Faster, Age Slower

By Editorial Staff

Walking is good for you, pure and simple. It can help you live longer via multiple mechanisms, but since we've been discussing biological aging lately (read "Bad for the Bowel" in the [April issue](#), where we present a study suggesting biological aging can increase bowel cancer risk), let's focus on the connection here. Evidence links speed of walking with biological aging; the faster you walk, the slower you age biologically. The lower your biological age, the younger you are in terms of your health – regardless of your age.

Researchers evaluated whether walking pace influenced longevity in a large sample of 40,000-plus adults. Independent of the total amount of physical activity performed in addition to walking, faster walking pace (steady/average or brisk) was associated with significantly longer telomeres – caps on the end of chromosomes that get shorter with age – compared with slower walkers. Telomere length is regarded as an indicator of biological age – one's age compared to chronological age.

Writing on their findings in *Communication Biology*, the researchers estimate that a lifetime of brisk walking could be significant, to say the least, in terms of telomere length and thus biological age: approximately *16 years younger* by midlife. Sixteen years; now isn't that worth lacing up and walking every day? Talk to your doctor for more information on the health (and wellness) benefits of physical activity including the simple act of walking.

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