

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



464 How to Walk Your Way to Better Sleep and Health

Is better health a goal for you in 2020? Maybe you want to lose a few pounds, sleep better, and just feel better. I'm Jerry Roberts and I may have a simple way most people can do that. It's coming next on The Extra Point.

I've never been much of a runner, but I've done all kinds of walking over the years. That includes doing it on treadmills, beach walking, brisk walking, even walking in place. I recently caught an article that discussed walking and sleep, and I want to share parts of it.

Question: does more walking during the day equal better sleep at night? A study, conducted by researchers at Brandeis University in Massachusetts and other institutions, suggested that's the case. The study encouraged 59 mostly middle-aged adults, all full-time workers in the Boston area, to be more active.

The volunteers wore devices for a month, tracking their physical movements including the number of steps taken. They submitted data during each day of the study, including how they rated their sleep. How long it took to fall asleep, how often they woke during the night, and how refreshed they felt the next morning. They measured the sleep in both quantity and quality. When the sleep data was matched up to the activity data, some interesting conclusions were reached.

It turned out the relationships between moving and sleep is consistent and strong. Basically, the more steps people accumulated over the course of the month, the higher they rated their sleep. It was the same with overall movement. The sleep improved.

Further, when they looked at the daily reports the conclusion held up. In case you're wondering about the number of steps, the 59 participants rang up about 7,000 a day, which is roughly three miles worth. On a day-by-day basis, when people walked or moved more,

they slept better.

Is more always better? The article referenced other data that showed participating in tremendously intense and stressful exercise, programs like *Insanity* and others, people who had their sessions after work or later at night, actually had more sleep problems. You might think they'd sleep better through sheer exhaustion, but that's not how it came out.

In July I began walking five times a week, about 12,000 steps. My sleep increased by a half-hour to an hour each night and I woke up far more refreshed. That led to higher production during the day. Along with some intermittent fasting, it resulted in me losing about 15 pounds.

Then I got extremely busy with Live2Lead and the walking stopped. I slept less, felt less refreshed, the intermittent fasting ended, and I put weight back on. In reality, I lived what this study was all about.

If you're struggling with getting going on a program that will see you in better health for the coming year, using a walking regimen as the foundation of that program may make good sense for you. If you haven't exercised in a long time or you know you have risk factors, I suggest you see your doctor before taking on any regular exercise plan.

In 2020 I'm after better sleep, better health, and better productivity. I think regular walking is going to be a key component of all that.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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