

WHY WALKING IS GOOD FOR YOU !

Research by the

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

To measure the link between physical inactivity and premature death, and their interaction with obesity, researchers analysed data from 334,161 European men and women participating in the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) Study. Between 1992 and 2000, they measured height, weight, waist circumference and levels of physical activity. All were then followed up over the next 12 years, during which 21,438 of them died. The results were published **January 2015** in the American Journal of Clinical Exercise.

The researchers found that the greatest reduction in risk of premature death occurred between ‘inactive’ and ‘moderately inactive’ groups, judged by combining work activity with recreational activity. Just under a quarter of participants were categorised as inactive, reporting no recreational activity and a sedentary occupation. The authors estimate that doing exercise equivalent to just a 20 minute brisk walk each day – burning between 90 and 110 calories – would take an individual from the ‘inactive’ to the ‘moderately inactive’ group and reduce their risk of premature death by between 16% and 30%. ***The impact was greatest amongst normal weight individuals, but even those with a higher body mass index (BMI) saw a benefit.***



Using the most recent data on deaths in Europe, the researchers estimate that 337,000 of the 9.2 million deaths amongst European men and women were due to obesity (BMI more than 30). ***However, double this number of deaths (676,000) could be due to physical inactivity.***