



Photo by Mark Vlen

University students and Delta Delta Delta sorority members Sherri Mangel and Lisa Richman take a leisurely walk down University Street as part of their daily exercise. Although walking is underestimated as a sport, more people are turning to walking for workouts and relaxation.

## Walking frenzy grows as sport gains enthusiasts

By Madeline Cox  
Emerald Contributor

Four times a week, sophomore Shauna Carragher suits up in shorts and a sweatshirt and heads out for five miles of exhilarating exercise.

What is she doing? She's walking. It sounds easy and it is, considering most people learn to walk by the time they're two. But sports enthusiasts all over are giving this workout a second look.

Though known for its low impact benefits, "walking is underestimated as a sport," said Kathe Shaw Beck, member service coordinator and instructor of the walking class at the Downtown Athletic Club.

It's also not uncommon to find that people who walk are also participating in other forms of exercise. "Walking is a great cross-training sport," Shaw Beck said. Because most forms of exercise are often

high-impact, high-injury risk activities, she said that walking is the perfect complement to anyone's workout, whether they're a serious athlete or just trying to stay in shape.

And students on campus are taking full advantage of this walking frenzy. "Walking is a nice break from my usual workouts," Carragher said, who swims regularly and coaches the diving teams at South Eugene, Churchill and Sheldon high schools.

Walking as a primary form of exercise can be beneficial as well. According to *Current Health* magazine (May 1989), in addition to the aerobic benefits, a brisk walk can burn from 320 to 450 calories an hour. It's also a good way to relieve stress and clear the mind.

And even though walking takes up more time than running the same distance, junior Lisa Richman said, "I can go for two miles and not feel worse than when I started."

If walking is so easy, why do people insist on dressing up in fancy exercise clothing to do what they could do in jeans? Shaw Beck said there are benefits beyond the comfort and practical weather protection of most athletic gear.

"Changing clothes helps you move into the mentality of an athlete," she said.

But walking, like other forms of exercise must be done with regularity to notice a change in weight. According to *Prevention* magazine (Sept. 1988), the increased calorie-burning that happens during your walk continues for a while after your walk is over (referred to as "after-burn"). But with regular walking (three times a week), this "after-burn" can turn into a "continual-burn."

Walking critics might think the exercise isn't challenging enough to the body, but they should beware of adding weights to the ankles or wrists. Janet Dufek, assistant professor

in the biomechanics department at the University warns, "There's a chance you'll change the way you move."

Dufek said the sudden addi-


tion of weight may place the body in trauma. Dufek suggests trying a weight vest or something that rests closer to the center of the body when adding weight to a walking workout.

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