

But possibly the day will come when [the landscape] will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only, — when fences shall be multiplied, and man-traps and other engines invented to confine men to the public road, and walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds. To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it. Let us improve our opportunities, then, before the evil days come.

— Henry David Thoreau



Voting With Your Feet

Why the simplest exercise is more

important than ever ■ Story and photos by Chuck Adams

Hiking in nature is a drag. By the time I check the weather website, pack my daypack, try to convince friends they want to come along, prepare a lunch, fill up my gas tank and drive the 50-100 miles to the trailhead, I'm a writhing ball of stress. Sure, the hike might loosen me up a little, help me reconnect to this so-called "nature," but usually all the benefits are lost when I turn the ignition and have to drive the 50-100 miles home, only to spend a half-day refilling my gas tank, restocking my fridge, washing my gear, putting it back in storage and flopping on my couch in front of

a movie to "unwind" from my day of forested hiking. Screw that!

Why am I led to believe that the only acceptable walking I do out of a desire for a sound body and mind needs to take place on a trail laid out in a wooded expanse further than a day's walk from my apartment? Okay, suppose I walk the day's walk to get to the Golden Trail. Would all the walking I had done prior to arrival been nothing but mere travel? Now that I could begin my "hike" in earnest, would I suddenly start noticing the ferns, the bird calls, the inner voice of con-

templation? Bollocks!

There is an urgent need to rediscover the art of walking as civic engagement. I'm not talking about social engagement (e.g. art walks, peace marches, prostitution), nor am I talking about fitness walking — or jogging, for that matter — since many of us perform exercise with waxy eyes and earphones firmly in place. To reconnect foot movement with the five senses without so much as burning one fossil fuel: Now there's some sound peace of mind.

Going for a walk fits into anyone's schedule. It is the 15 minutes after you finish lunch and before your afternoon shift. It is parking an extra eight blocks away from the Bijou — on purpose — before a show. It is the substitute for sitting through an average sitcom sandwiched between two extraordinary sitcoms. It is getting up, getting outside and taking deep breaths.

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