



one good walk

A new study finds that one brisk walk a day may be all it takes to keep your brain healthier for longer

BY DR. ART HISTER



man for himself if we don't go for that walk right away.

In a study presented at a recent meeting of the Radiological Society of North America (the “hottest doctors”), researchers tracked 426 people for over 20 years including more than 200 healthy elderly adults without any evidence of early dementia, 83 adults with “mild cognitive impairment” (meaning they had some cognitive decline, although nothing approaching full dementia),

Perhaps the most notable and happiest finding, however, is that the study subjects didn't have to do much walking to get those benefits to their brains.

In fact, both those who already had mild cognitive impairment and those who had already been diagnosed with early Alzheimer's disease saw a significant benefit from walking only the equivalent of roughly 58 blocks a week. I'm no math genius, but even I can figure out that's roughly only eight

The impressive results were no surprise: those who did the most walking had the least shrinkage in brain volume

and 44 adults who had been diagnosed with early Alzheimer's disease.

The researchers monitored how much each study subject walked every week, and at both the 10-year mark of the study and after 20 years, each study subject got cognitive testing and an MRI to determine brain volume (the risk of dementia rises as brain volume shrinks).

The impressive results were no surprise, really: in all three groups, those who did the most walking had the least shrinkage in brain volume, as well as the least decline in cognitive function.

standard city blocks a day. Healthy adults needed to walk just a bit more (72 blocks a week or roughly 10 blocks a day) to get similar benefits.

Now, I know everyone reading this column is extremely busy, and I wouldn't want to interfere with all those crucial business matters you take care of every day at Tim Hortons, but I'm still pretty sure most of you can find enough time to briskly walk 10 blocks or so most days — if only to walk off the artery-clogging effect of a couple of double-doubles. ■

Here's the easiest tactic you'll ever hear of to lower your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease: just take a “wee walkies” every day. You don't have to own a doggie (or as in my case, be owned by a doggie) to go for regular walkies, although it certainly helps you keep to

the program if you do.

I mean, if I'm even 15 minutes late for one of his mandatory daily two outings, Tonka, my Rottweiler, lets several of my senses — at the same time — quickly understand that “this won't be tolerated much longer, dude.” After a half-hour, my house smells enough so that it's every

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