

7 Reasons Why Pokémon Go is Good for Your Health

Pokémon GO has become a worldwide phenomenon; but could it also improve public health by introducing the gaming generation to the benefits of playing outside?

AUSTIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, August 3, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Without question, Pokémon GO has become a worldwide phenomenon – thanks to its unique augmented reality gameplay. But could it also improve public health by introducing the gaming generation to the benefits of playing outside?

There's no question that Pokémon Go has become an overnight business success. The augmented reality game was reportedly the most downloaded app ever in its first week. It garnered over 20 million active users in the United States within the first two weeks alone. As the game has expanded around the world, Pokémon Go appears to have even overtaken the number of American Twitter users – 65 million – during its short time on the market.

Business analysts estimate that Apple Computer may earn more than \$3 billion in the next few years by selling PokéCoins from their app store. The game developer, Niantic Inc., is also a big winner. Originally a Google in-house project, Niantic was spun off on its own in October 2015, not long after Google reorganized itself under the new Alphabet Inc., the parent company.



Pokemon Go in action



Playing Pokemon Go at office

Pokémon Go Takes You Outside

To play Pokémon Go, users need to explore their outdoor surroundings in order to capture characters



Unlike most traditional video games that take place in a darkened room, Pokémon Go encourages you to get out and explore the great outdoors.

Formaspace

using the camera on their smartphones.

Given the millions of users actively playing the game, public health experts are busy trying to quantify whether Pokémon Go is having a net positive effect on our overall public health.

Let's take a look at some of the ways we think that Pokémon Go is good for your health:

1. New Estimate: Inactivity Costs the World Economy More Than \$67 Billion

Researchers have tried to quantify the economic impact that physical inactivity has on our direct healthcare costs, worker productivity, disability and life span. According to a recent report in The Lancet, the pandemic of physical inactivity tops \$67 billion dollars in costs.

So if Pokémon Go can encourage millions of gamers and office workers around the world to get outside and walk around, it will have a calculable positive impact on public health.

2. New Health Recommendation: One Hour of Moderate Intensity Exercise for Each Eight Hours of Sitting

We have long been proponents of moving around during the workday to help prevent back pain and other health conditions brought on by low levels of physical activity. It's also important to not sit down at a desk for solid eight hours – check out our line of sit-to-stand desks for a healthier alternative at work.

Another recent medical study indicates that we should try to get one hour of moderately intense exercise for each eight hours of sitting.

The opportunity to walk around outside while [playing Pokémon Go](#) at lunchtime is a great way to motivate employees to get up off their chairs and get some moderate intensity exercise during the day.

3. Measure Your Steps with a Pedometer or Personal Health Device Such As a FitBit or a Misfit.

If you've been measuring your daily steps with a pedometer, you might be surprised that playing Pokémon Go can increase your daily workout.

There's been anecdotal evidence that some Pokémon Go players have tripled or quadrupled the number of steps they take per day in their quest to find Pokémon characters using their smartphones.

Thankfully, the game developers have incorporated incentives to make walking an essential part of the game. For example, you may have to explore different environments to capture different categories of characters – you may have more luck finding a rare water dwelling character by seeking out a water feature like a fountain or river or lake.

This built-in gameplay, in turn, encourages more time dedicated to healthy walking among Pokémon Go users.

4. Walk Your Dog While You Play Pokémon Go.

Unlike most traditional video games that take place in a darkened room, staring in front of a computer screen, Pokémon Go encourages you to get out and explore the great outdoors.

Why not take man's best friend along for the journey? You'll both be healthier for it.

According to a recent University of Missouri study, dog walking has many positive health associations, including a lower body mass index, reduced number of doctor visits, and increased amounts of moderate to vigorous exercise.

5. Walking Has a Positive Effect on Creative Thinking

The American Psychological Association reports in their 2014 Journal of Experimental Psychology that walking outside opens up the free flow of ideas.

Compared to sitting inside, walking on a treadmill indoors or being rolled around in a wheelchair outdoors, walking outside is far and away the most simple and robust solution for increasing creativity.

So it's quite possible that simply walking around outside playing Pokémon Go could help you become more creative, and who doesn't want that?

6. Study Indicates That Walking in the Great Outdoors Makes Us Less Prone to Depressive Thoughts

Another study published in PNAS (the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America) takes a look at the differences in mental health between taking a 90-minute walk in an urban setting compared to a similar walk in a natural setting.

This study's authors conclude that being outside walking in nature can help us by taking our minds off what they call rumination – self-referential thoughts associated with a heightened risk of depression or other mental illnesses.

So when we hear the expression, 'take a walk to clear your head,' there seems to be some truth to this – according to this scientific study, walking in natural areas does seem to provide a true mental health benefit.

This seems like another good reason to take up the Pokémon Go game as a motivational tool for your mental wellbeing — so get out and about and enjoy in the great outdoors.

7. Pokémon Go Can Help People of All Abilities Share in a Common Social Activity

There's increasing anecdotal evidence that Pokémon Go players are meeting neighbors and making new acquaintances and friends as part of playing the game.

The social commentary website Reddit has created a whole new section (called a subreddit in Reddit-speak) dedicated to bringing Pokémon aficionados together to share their love of Pokémon Go.

Differently-abled individuals are also taking part in the game as well.

There have been many reports of autistic players – who might otherwise be resistant to socializing in public – who have become eager to play Pokémon Go.

In one of the BBC News Report, a UK teenager who has reportedly avoided going outside to play for the last five years has taken to going outside and play the game.

In a time where there seems to be so much division and strife in the world, will an augmented reality game bring us together?

Time will tell.

Have You Experienced Health Benefits from Playing Pokémon Go?

We're interested in your view on augmented reality games like Pokémon Go.

Do you play it? If so, has it increased your physical activity levels in the past few weeks? What about your levels of productivity or creativity in the workplace?

Let us know what your own experience has been.

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