

About walking

At some point of every trip you are a pedestrian — whether it's to and from your car or the train, or all the way to your destination. Yet, while everybody naturally does it, nobody thinks about it—walkers, engineers or politicians. In 2/3 of Massachusetts towns, walking is the second most popular mode of transportation. But nobody looks at what will increase walking, or make it safer and nicer.

That's why we need an advocacy group such as WalkBoston: to promote, encourage and facilitate walking and its many benefits.

Walking remains the cheapest form of transportation. A walkable community is the most affordable system to plan, construct and maintain. Walkable communities encourage social interaction, physical fitness, stronger commerce and diminished crime.

Here are some handy tips, facts, insights and real on-the-books laws for pedestrians. Learn, laugh and have fun reading as you walk.

For your information

More people will walk if walking conditions are safe, continuous, sociable and enticing [just as more people have been induced to drive by wider, faster roads].

- 90% of pedestrians hit by cars die when struck at 40 m.p.h. compared to 5% at 20 m.p.h.
- Narrowing a travel lane from 11 feet to 10 feet reduces speed by 7 mph.
- Nationwide it costs \$15,000-\$40,000 per car for a parking structure....it costs as little as \$8-\$9 per linear foot for a 5-foot sidewalk, wide enough for sociable walking by two people.
- 27% of trips are one mile or less, yet 3/4 of these are made by car. Walking would take 20 minutes or less.
- Every minute of walking can extend your life by 1.5 to 2 minutes.
- Only 25% of Americans meet the Surgeon General's recommendation for physical activity.
- In Massachusetts 54% of adults and 25% of children are overweight or obese.
- Nationally, walking accounts for 7.2% of all trips, and receives less than 1% of federal funding.

For Massachusetts

- 10.4% of all Massachusetts trips are walking trips, 44% higher than the national average. That gives Massachusetts the fourth highest walk share [after New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois].
- 12% of Massachusetts residents walk to work.
- 24% of Cambridge residents walk to work.
- Massachusetts has the 12th lowest pedestrian fatality rate in the U.S., at 1.3 deaths per 100,000 people. That is 40% below the national average.
- 86 pedestrians are killed by motor vehicles every year in Massachusetts. Of 462 traffic fatalities, 18% were pedestrians.

For your safety

Pedestrians include walkers and anyone operating a human-powered vehicle, such as wheelchairs, inline skaters, and push-scooters.

Walking along the street: Use the sidewalk if one is provided. If not, walk in the shoulder facing traffic.

Crossing the street: If you are within 300 feet of a marked crosswalk, an intersection with a traffic signal, a pedestrian tunnel or overpass, or a police officer directing traffic, you must go there to cross.

Otherwise, before crossing, stop at curb and look in both directions - left, right, then left again.

Penalty: The penalty for violations is a fine of \$1, except that the fourth or subsequent offense within the same calendar year carries a fine of \$2.

Yield to Pedestrian Law: When traffic signals are not in place or in operation, drivers must yield right of way by slowing or stopping when a pedestrian in a crosswalk is within 10 feet of their vehicle's travel lane.

Penalty: Failure to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk is punishable by a fine of \$200.

Engine Idling Law: The unnecessary operation of a motor vehicle engine while the vehicle is stopped may not exceed 5 minutes.

Watch for cars backing up and pulling out of parking spaces and driveways.

At night: Carry a flashlight while near roadways, and put reflective stripes on clothing and shoes.

For your health

Americans engage in walking on a daily basis. It is a safe, low-impact exercise for all ages; it's fun and gets you where you need to go. It also has numerous health benefits including:

- Controls and prevents hypertension
 - Increases HDL-cholesterol levels [good cholesterol]
 - Limits Type 2 Diabetes
 - Controls weight
 - Increases bone density
 - Decreases mental stress
 - Improves circulation and posture
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- Walking an extra 20 minutes each day will burn off 7 pounds of body fat per year.
 - Longer, moderately-paced daily walks [40 minutes at 60-65% maximum heart rate] are best for weight loss.
 - Short, fast walks [20-25 minutes at 75- 85% maximum heart rate] are best for heart and lung conditioning.
 - To burn off 1 M&M candy, you need to walk the full length of a football field [100 yards].
 - 1 mile equals about 2,000 steps. Most people walk no more than 6,000 steps daily. Doctors recommend 10,000 steps [5 miles] a day for a healthy lifestyle.

For your reference and reading

Websites:

- WalkBoston | walkboston.org
- America Walks | americawalks.org
- Shape Up America! | shapeup.org
- Ped & Bicycle Info. Center (PBIC) | walkinginfo.org
- Walkable America | walkableamerica.org
- Walkable Communities | walkablecommunities.org
- Governor's Highway Safety Bureau | mass.gov/ghsb.com

Books:

- WalkBoston: Tours of Boston's Unique Neighborhoods | Bob Sloane, Appalachian Mountain Club Books
- Car-Free in Boston | Jeff Perk, Rubel Bike Maps
- Asphalt Nation | Jane Holtz Kay
- Wanderlust: A History of Walking | Rebecca Solnit
- Henry Hikes to Fitchburg | DB Johnson [children's]
- And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street | Dr. Seuss [children's]

For your inspiration

“Commuters scurry; shoppers meander; bushwalkers trek; power-walkers stride; lovers stroll; tourists promenade; protesters march. But we all walk.”

Australian Pedestrian Charter

“It is solved by walking.”

Latin Proverb

“Walking is a good activity because it’s easy, it’s enjoyable, it gives an energy boost, and it can even be fit into a busy day. Exercise is as simple as walking to a good restaurant!”

Miriam Nelson | Director of Tufts University Center for Physical Activity and Nutrition

“Before supper walk a little; after supper do the same.”

Erasmus

“The evidence is mounting that walking confers health benefits similar to vigorous exercise...and with lower risk of injury. I view walking as a nearly perfect form of exercise.”

Dr. JoAnn Manson | Brigham and Women’s Hospital

“Walking would teach people the quality that youngsters find so hard to learn—patience.”

Edward Payson Weston

“I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks—who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering...”

Henry David Thoreau

“Of all exercises walking is the best.”

Thomas Jefferson

“The sum of the whole is this: walk and be happy; walk and be healthy. The best way to lengthen out our days is to walk steadily and with a purpose.”

Charles Dickens

“Take a two-mile walk every morning before breakfast.”

Harry Truman | “How to Live to be 80” on his 80th birthday

“I am a slow walker, but I never walk backwards.”

Abraham Lincoln

“Two roads diverged in a wood and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.”

Robert Frost | The Road Not Taken

For your community

- Education induces people to walk for more trips, and makes them aware of changes needed and what works.
- Knowledge helps people learn how to make changes.
- Advocacy creates walkable places so that people will enjoy and be safe walking.
- Walkable cities have wide sidewalks, frequent WALK lights, intersection bulb-outs that shorten crossing distance and tight corners that slow turning traffic.
- At city, town and state levels, WalkBoston has created support for pedestrian streetscapes.
- Since 1996, thanks to an initiative of WalkBoston and MassBike, state law requires MassHighway to construct pedestrian and bicycle facilities with every construction or reconstruction project.
- WalkBoston is supporting 25 mph speeds in downtown and residential areas, safer crosswalk laws, and enforcement of red-light running, which causes an estimated 260,000 crashes a year.
- Safe Routes to Schools programs increase children’s walking/bicycling to school. A proposed statewide program would help reverse walk-to-school rates that have dropped from 65% 30 years ago to 10% today.

About WalkBoston

WalkBoston is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to improving walking conditions in cities and towns across Massachusetts. Founded in 1990, our goal is to make walking and pedestrian needs a basic part of the transportation discussion.

Our mission is to create and preserve safe walking environments that build vital communities. We promote walking for transportation, health and recreation through education and advocacy.

With your support, WalkBoston can continue to be the resource for pedestrian issues. We look forward to helping you make your community more walkable.



MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES MORE WALKABLE

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