

Study: Walking spurs creativity

By Deborah Netburn, Los Angeles Times

Want to get creative? Get up and go for a walk.

People generate more creative ideas when they walk than when they sit, according to a study published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition.

“Everyone always says going on a walk gives you new ideas, but nobody had ever proved it before,” said Marily Oppezzo, a psychology professor at Santa Clara University and the lead author of the study.

To test for creativity, Oppezzo asked volunteers (mostly college students) to come up with alternative uses for a common item like a tire or a tweezer. Creative suggestions for a button, for example, might include tiny strainer, dollhouse doorknob or the eye for a doll.

In the first experiment, volunteers were given four minutes to complete the creativity test – first while sitting at a desk in a small room, and then while walking on a treadmill. Of the 48 participants in the study, 81 percent improved their creative output when walking.

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