

Young Hearts Walk Free

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NEW SURVEY REVEALS HALF OF YOUNG ADULTS ARE WALKING MORE IN 2018...FOR FUN

Has walking become cool in 2018? Young adults may have a reputation for talking the talk, but according to a new survey, it now appears they're walking the walk too.

A YouGov poll of over 2,000 British adults, commissioned by leading outdoor footwear brand Merrell (https://www.merrell.com/UK/en_GB/home) who were keen to investigate a spike in popularity across the UK for the humble hike, found that a staggering 49% of 18 to 24 year olds are walking for leisure more frequently in 2018 than in previous years.

The survey showed that 54% of young adults lace up their walking boots for leisure at least once a week to get outside and enjoy the great outdoors.

Move over Netflix and chill, over half of young adults surveyed (51%) revealed they rambled to relax.

Almost half of 18 to 24-year-old respondents (46%) cited they walked to help improve their mental health, whilst 47% said they took a hike to improve their fitness.

Enjoying new experiences (15%) and socialising (27%) are also included in their rationale for rambling.

Results showed a similar theme for the millennial demographic (22 to 36 years old), as 39% said they walked for leisure more in 2018 than in previous years.

Walking groups are on the rise and attracting younger members as an escape from the daily grind. Rebecca Chambers, 27, a member of Metropolitan Walkers, a London-based walking group for young adults commented, "It is a great way to take a break from the busy city and switch off from work.

"Instead of going out drinking on a Friday night, I'm much more likely to see friends mid-week, leaving more time for walking on the weekend."

The survey results are at odds with the long-held preconception that hiking is an old man's game, as walking has fast become a fad exercise of 2018.

Forget cagoules and walking poles, rambling has been injected with a dose of cool this year. The growing trend could be inspired by celebrities such as Gigi Hadid, Kendal Jenner and Taylor Swift snapping their walks in Instagram in the past 12 months.

The results reveal a significant rise in walking participation amongst young adults as they take advantage of the many mental and physical benefits of walking whilst embracing the outdoors.

The survey supports a recent study by University College London which found that the proportion of young adults who say they never drink alcohol rose from 18% in 2005 to 29% in 2015.

The researchers said the drop in numbers of young adults drinking suggested a shift in attitudes towards alcohol. They say this could be due to increased awareness of the health risks of alcohol, as well as changes in the way young people spend their leisure time.

Dr Andrew Murray, an ambassador with Merrell, NHS Inform, and researcher with the University of Edinburgh commented: "Regular physical activity is one of the best things you can do for your health. It adds years to life, improves physical and mental health, and even increases productivity.

"Walking regularly may be the best present you can give your body and brain. People are turning to walking because it makes them feel good and now science is proving that getting some exercise and fresh air is good for body and mind."

Hugh Sweeney, European Marketing Manager at Merrell Hugh Sweeney said, "The survey suggests there has been a cultural shift in young adults' lifestyles. There appears to be a greater focus on physical and mental wellbeing and social experiences – walking ticks all the boxes.

"Hiking has removed the label that it's an activity for older generations in 2018. We've seen an increase in younger customers who are coming to realise the benefits of the outdoors. As a result, we're creating more style-led walking boots such as the new Merrell MOAB FST 2 walking boot that appeal to this younger audience."

- ENDS -

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NOTES TO EDITOR

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2015 adults, 888 of which exercise three times a week or more. Fieldwork was undertaken between 23rd - 24th April 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

University College London study
(<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-018-5995-3>)

ABOUT MERRELL:

Founded in 1981 in Vermont, United States by Randy Merrell and Clark Matis, Merrell is now the world's

No. 1 rugged outdoor footwear brand with products distributed in over 190 countries. Merrell products are built on our heritage of quality and performance. Our stylish product and innovative technologies deliver ready to wear comfort and performance.

* Merrell is ranked by Sporting Goods Intelligence as the Number 1 Worldwide Rugged Outdoor Footwear Brand by market share.

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