**Benefits Of Walking Meditation**

A short path lies near the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha is said to have gained enlightenment. Legend has it that the Buddha slowly paced up and down the path after becoming enlightened, experiencing joy and mindfulness as he walked. In his teachings the Buddha encouraged followers to develop mindfulness in all positions, including walking.

Many centuries later walking meditation remains an important practice in the development of mindfulness. As the Buddha knew, the benefits of mindful walking are diverse and profound.

**Development of Mindfulness in Daily Life**

The practice of walking meditation helps develop mindfulness in everyday life. Buddhist author and teacher John Ciancosi explains it this way: “If you can learn to establish awareness during walking meditation—when you are physically moving with your eyes open—then it won’t be difficult to arouse that same wakeful quality during other activities…Your meditation will begin to permeate your entire life.”

By supporting mindfulness, walking meditation, Ciancosi continues, “keeps your consciousness alive and alert to reality, thereby transforming ordinary life into a continuous practice of meditation, and transforming the mundane into the spiritual.”

This meditation in action trains the mind to be wakeful and aware, increasing the sense of mindfulness in everyday activities. Because it can be practiced in short periods of time—even during normal transitions from car to office, for example–walking meditation is easy to incorporate into daily routines.

**Health and Well-being**

Walking meditation has health benefits even beyond the benefits of sitting meditation. The slow, methodical movements relieve stress, calm the body, and focus the mind—all of which are essential for optimal health and well-being. Many practitioners find mindful walking to be more relaxing than sitting, especially during times of high stress. While it may seem paradoxical, walking meditation can be both relaxing and invigorating at the same time.

Mindful walking can help relieve arthritis, improve digestion, and reduce drowsiness after eating. When done for extended periods of time it increases stamina and strength, which are important for overall physical fitness.

Peace of mind is not the least of the benefits of meditation and walking. Just a few minutes of mindful movement calms the overactive mind. A break in the daily routine allows mental stress to lessen and insights to flow, leading to creative solutions to troubling problems.

When meditation and walking occur outside the senses can take in the sights, sounds, and aromas of the out-of-doors, giving the mind a focus and a break from what can be a destructive obsession with problems and internal distress.

**Aid to Sitting Meditation**

For some, walking meditation creates a bridge between everyday life and sitting meditation, easing the way into sitting. The movement seems to quiet the body after the activity of the world and allow it to settle into practice naturally. For long periods of sitting, mindful walking is a way to relieve the physical discomfort of the seated position without interrupting the formal meditation practice.

**Staying in the Moment**

As with seated meditation, walking is a way to train the mind to stay in the present moment and reside in a wakeful state. Concentrating on the steps and movements of the body is another tool for cultivating mindfulness and keeping distractions at bay.

Walking meditation heightens awareness, concentration, and serenity; it can enhance the meditation practice, leading to new levels of mindfulness, freedom, and joy.

Source: http://eocinstitute.org/meditation/meditation-and-walking-benefits-of-mindful-walking/