

# Women With Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) Are Walking With a Purpose.



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The latest installment of Curb Your Enthusiasm introduced its audience with an episode titled “The Mini Bar”, one of the pivotal domino pieces that unravel the overall schematic plot of the season. Noteworthy for its witty plot development, the show is known for its ability to pull along separate threads and weave an unpredictable, yet sensical ending. But, the focus of this blog post is not solely on the show. Instead, it will highlight an important moment in the series that is conjointly beneficial to individuals with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).

In Season 11, Episode 2, the protagonist of the series, Larry David made a bold statement upon turning down an offer to go for a walk with a couple of his friends.

*“ Ehh.. I don't really like a purposeless walk..the walk has to be the secondary activity, it can't be the primary activity”.*

For the PCOS community, walking is an evidence-based form of exercise to combat some of the symptoms of PCOS. In the spirit of purposeful walking remarked by Larry David, here is a list of reasons why walking can benefit women with PCOS.

# Put On a Pair of Walking Shoes and Get Strolling

## 1. Walking helps with weight loss.

Walking, either brisk, fast-paced, or on an incline is a form of steady state cardiovascular workout which keeps the body active. As an exercise, it raises the level of calorie and energy expenditure which is an important component of the weight loss formula. That calorie-burning factor is especially helpful in metabolic conditions such as PCOS because the inflicted hormonal imbalance is strongly associated with weight gain. A recent [study](#) published in the Human Reproduction journal mirrored this detail by capturing that women with PCOS gain more weight annually than those without [1].

Fret not, however, multitudes of research have documented the effectiveness of exercises, including walking, to an overall BMI reduction among women with PCOS. A [systematic review](#) even suggests that a minimum of 120 mins of exercise of vigorous intensity per week is necessary for overall improved well-being for women with PCOS [2]

## 2. Walking lowers inflammatory markers.

Chronic low-grade systemic inflammation is a contributor to PCOS's disease pathway, despite its unclear mode of causation. Some [bodies of study](#) proposed that high inflammatory markers are linked to insulin resistance and heightened androgen levels. Persistently raised inflammation markers physically manifest as an increased risk of cardiovascular disease [3].

To curb this, women with PCOS can incorporate physical exercise, as simple as brisk walking into their daily routine. An [investigation](#) studying the link between physical activity and inflammatory biomarkers revealed that walking is beneficial for women with PCOS [4]. Researchers discovered women with PCOS can reduce main serum inflammatory markers (C-reactive protein and IL-6) by increasing their daily step count. In return, this intervention will improve overall well well-being and cardiovascular health.

## 3. Walking improves insulin resistance.

Insulin resistance is a main characteristic of PCOS, leading to androgen excess and its subsequent physical symptoms such as hirsutism (excess hair growth) and weight gain. During routine clinical visits, women with PCOS are frequently reminded to improve their metabolic health through exercise and diet.

Specifically, a new [study](#) has outlined how women with PCOS can improve insulin sensitivity by practicing a simple modification to their daily lifestyle [5]. The assigned researchers from Imperial College London established that continuous cardiovascular

workout of at least 30 minutes and more after a meal can increase tissue glucose uptake and the body's sensitivity to insulin.

#### 4. Walking boosts reproductive health.

A complication of PCOS that often leads to its diagnosis is the disruption of various stages of a woman's reproductive system. Many women are unaware that they have been living with PCOS until they seek medical attention for infertility. Oftentimes, lifestyle modification will be the first recommended line of treatment for newly-diagnosed women. Again, exercise is a powerful component of the treatment prescription of PCOS. [Evidence](#) implies that exercise interventions such as walking, and high-intensity training (HIIT) help to improve menstrual and/or ovulation frequency [6].

#### 5. Walking creates healthier body composition.

When it comes to health and the body distribution of fat, not all weight gain is equal. Abdominal obesity, also known as central or truncal obesity, is highly associated with a heightened risk for cardiovascular and metabolic disease, rendering it relevant to the PCOS community. Exercise plays a role to reduce the adiposity in the abdomen as outlined in a [study](#) that highlights its ability to reduce the waist-to-hip ratio [7].

Women with PCOS should take the initiative of putting on a pair of walking shoes and start allocating time for active, purposeful walking. Besides the listed evidence-based benefits of walking for the PCOS community, it is a great avenue for mood-booster, mindfulness, and social interaction. A word of caution, however. Be mindful to not subject your body to long hours of exercising as it can increase cortisol levels since exercise is also a form of stress. Moderate exercise like brisk walking is an ideal form of workout to reap all the benefits of physical activity without exposing the body to extreme duress.



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