

More Scots walk to boost their mental health

Scottish walking charity urges the public to get moving in the winter months

An increasing number of Scots are using walking as a means to boost their mental health and beat their winter woes.

The 2023 National Survey of Attitudes to Walking and Wheeling in Scotland, commissioned by charity Paths for All, reveals that an increasing number of Scots are taking short strolls to improve their mental and physical wellbeing.

Specifically, the percentage of respondents citing mental health as a motivation for walking rose from 78% in 2019 to 84% last year.

Louise Bursle, Communications & Marketing Manager at Paths for All, said: "A brisk winter walk releases feel-good endorphins that can help relieve stress and boost your mood.

"The results from the 2023 survey are very encouraging. They show that more and more Scots recognise the incredible benefits that walking brings to both their physical and mental health.

"Walking with friends or family also gives you that social connection we all need for good mental health. So, we encourage everyone across Scotland to get outside, enjoy nature, and walk off the winter blues."

Walking has proven mental health benefits, especially during the dark winter months. The survey suggested that although the

physical health benefits tend to be more widely recognised and often a key motivator to increasing walking; more people described the emotional and wellbeing benefits of regular walking.

According to the national survey, 80% of Scots agree that walking helps them relax, and 77% say it clears their head and helps them concentrate.

Paths for All facilitates over 850 health walks across Scotland, with more than 14,000 dedicated volunteers leading and assisting the groups.

Established in 1996, Paths for All work in partnership with 30 national organisations with a shared vision of a healthier, happier, greener Scotland, where everyone can be active every day.

<https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/>

