

Introduction



This book is for people who like the idea of getting outdoors for some on-foot exercise, and either live in U.S. cities or travel to these cities for business or pleasure.

Most people would agree that on-foot exercise—running, jogging, or walking—is a really good thing. Any exercise unquestionably helps one control weight, increase life expectancy, feel more energetic, and look better. On-foot exercise has some particular attractions: It is inexpensive; it can be done almost anywhere and on your own schedule; it can be done alone or with company; and there are many ways to make it motivating and fun.

However, even those of us who really buy the idea of on-foot exercise will, all too often, admit we do not actually get out enough or keep going far enough. It is easy not to exercise.

I am convinced the main reason is that on-foot exercise is too often boring, devoid of attractions, and even downright uncomfortable. Many people really don't like emulating a hamster in an uninspiring, antisocial gym or hotel exercise room. Getting

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outdoors is much more pleasant and interesting. However, one is often unsure of where to go and what will be encountered on the way. In essence, on-foot exercise is, too often, just *not enough fun*. This makes it far too easy to resist carving out the necessary time from other activities that seem more comfortable and enjoyable, such as sitting around chatting, watching TV, and driving around in automobiles. Even work is all too often the excuse for not exercising. Hence, my most basic conclusion: One must always strive to make on-foot exercise fun. This is a key theme throughout this book.

A keen on-foot exerciser who has lived in a place a long time will know enjoyable on-foot routes there, having had the opportunity to explore the area, and to build familiarity and confidence in some favorite routes.

However, when new to an area or traveling, especially in a city, the situation is different. Most people do not find it easy to head out on foot in unfamiliar cities because of a shortage of the right information and the absence of a warm fuzzy feeling. The consequence: Forget it! Stay indoors, use the car, and worry about getting exercise another day. The same applies to many locals who have not quite found the motivation to seek out favorite outdoor on-foot routes in their hometowns.

In the case of America's cities, there is even a broad preconception that these are not generally good places to be outdoors on foot. On-foot exercise in cities is often considered to be an unpleasant and possibly even a dangerous activity.

As a seasoned traveler, I have experienced those feelings many times. I was a corporate road warrior for way too many years and I have always been a keen leisure traveler. However, I was lucky enough to have a few exceptional on-foot experiences on interesting routes in strange cities. This gave me cause to further explore how to make urban outdoor exercise motivating.

The first experience that stands out occurred several years ago, when I had a weekend business layover in downtown San Francisco. I was craving something healthy, energizing, and different to do. I became intrigued with the idea of jogging from Fisherman's Wharf to Sausalito across the Golden Gate Bridge. No guide books recommended this and my hotel concierge did not

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think it was feasible. However, I decided to give it a go. The result: The Bay was gorgeous; the bridge was far more awesome than it had ever been in a car; and there was an enormous amount to see. Finding the way into Sausalito was a little challenging. However, I ended up enjoying a beer, sandwich, and some memorable laughs with the locals in Sausalito, before catching the ferry back across the glorious bay. My feelings at the time were that this was the most enjoyable, exciting, and satisfying on-foot experience I had ever had.

As a result of that revelation, and many subsequent comparable experiences in other cities, I developed a new attitude. On-foot exercise in U.S. cities is not just OK but can be enormously enjoyable and rewarding from a range of perspectives. It can most definitely be *fun*. All one needs is some information up front, and this book aims to put that information in *your* hands.

I have a partner in crime who now needs to be introduced—my long-time wife and running mate, Nola. I rarely had the pleasure of her company during my business trips, but we have been a team in recent years for all the on-foot city explorations that provide the foundation for this book.

In this book I do not generally distinguish between running, jogging, and walking as forms of exercise. While faster exercise burns calories more quickly, all forms are good. Despite much time on foot, I am still abysmally slow, compared with any norm you might dream up. Nevertheless, jogging (many people would not grace my actions with the term *running*) is a key activity in preserving my fitness and keeping my weight down. On any given outing, Nola and I usually start out jogging. If either of our bodies starts to protest loudly enough along the way, we then fall back to walking. On other occasions, such as very hot days, we just decide at the outset to have a nice walk.

However, we always finish the route. We believe that is most important.

One thing that still surprises me is the number of people who are reluctant to try the routes described in this book saying, “I can’t walk four miles, and certainly not ten!” When pressed to try, they almost always must retract those preconceptions. If you just give it a try, almost anyone without severe disabilities can walk four miles

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without pain in under an hour-and-a-half and ten miles in three hours or so.

If you are prepared to do some walking but will not run or jog at all, this book is still for you. You might be surprised at how rapidly your distances and times improve.

When I say walking, I mean walking at a good pace—not strolling. One of the main impediments we on-foot exercisers face is that person who strolls along at a snail’s pace, blocking the sidewalk or pedestrian trail and making no attempt to get his or her blood pumping.

While slow pedestrians are a pain, there is one other entity that really is our Public Enemy Number 1: the *automobile*. The more we can tame our urge to get into that metal box, the more walking, jogging, or running we shall inevitably do. Therefore, when traveling, I do not like renting a car to drive somewhere to run an out-and-back loop from the car park. Since we can often survive and save our precious funds by not renting a car when traveling, I shall try to exclude automobile dependence throughout our travels in this book.

Enough of the preamble... Let us cut to the chase and spell out just where this book is going to take you. After my many years of skirting the fitness edge, I have become convinced that on-foot exercise becomes *enormously* more enjoyable if one ensures that the route chosen has four attributes: (1) comfort; (2) attractions; (3) convenience; and (4) a destination. Add to this a couple of other desirable but optional factors—such as good companionship and a nice day—and you are well on the way to more time out on foot.

Let me expand further on those four attributes of a route.

Comfort, which is the most essential attribute, has several elements, all of which are fairly obvious but worth noting. First, there should be minimal safety concerns. There should be a reasonable expectation that there will not be a nasty surprise around the next corner.¹ The number of other people around should be in your comfort zone (not too many and not too few). Underfoot conditions should also be reasonable, if not excellent. There should be a minimum of encounters with vehicular traffic.

¹ See the table of violent crime statistics at the end of this chapter.

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Comfort also depends on weather. Most people can run or jog comfortably at temperatures between 40 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, and if you are very fit you can likely add some leeway to that. If you really feel it is too hot, still go out, but maybe earlier in the day or run less and walk more. Running or jogging in wet, icy, or snowy conditions is not a good idea because of the risk of injury.²

By *attractions* I mean that the route should be environmentally pleasant and interesting. It helps enormously if a route has points of historic or cultural interest, scenic beauty, or people activities on the way. In major cities, there tend to be more interesting things to see and more people activities. Therefore, on-foot routes in major cities can often be winners in this regard. To be interesting, variety is also fundamental. Any route can become boring with time, so it is good to have some elements to vary each time. Also, we like to avoid out-and-back routes. Repeating everything you saw in the first half of a route on the way back is somehow less satisfying than having something new to see all the way. Therefore, we try to create circular routes; if necessary, we fill in part of the loop by another form of transportation.

Convenience means ease of getting to the start of a route from a city's center or the areas where visitors tend to stay. Similarly, getting back from the end of a route should be easy. Given our belief that the number one enemy of on-foot fitness is the automobile, we try to avoid any need for use of an automobile in getting to, from, or along our routes. If other forms of transportation are required to close a loop, we look mainly to public transit, so as to minimize costs, hassle, and dependence on the automobile.

Destination is an important factor to many people but not everyone. Serious runners frequently gain their on-foot satisfaction from successfully meeting their own time and distance goals, and are then content to get straight back to their home or hotel for a shower. However, a lot of people struggle to get out on-foot and to complete a route of sufficient distance. Having a clear destination

² Throughout this book we quote average temperature and precipitation statistics for U.S. cities. These are from the Weatherbase website of Canty and Associates, LLC: www.weatherbase.com.

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in mind helps make a route motivating and also reduces the temptation to quit early. If you are mentally on a mission to go somewhere enjoyable, then odds are you will make it there. Therefore, we consider it valuable to have routes end up in places where there is something interesting to see or do afterwards, should one so choose.

Another aspect of a destination that helps many people is having a good food-beverage opportunity waiting at the end. Nola and I have found this works for us. When we first started pushing ourselves to run more, it became apparent that Nola was way more likely to start and complete an eight-mile weekend jog if there was a tasty brunch at the end. I was way more likely to do the same if there was a glass of cold beer at the end. Is it a bad thing to encourage people to run, jog, or walk to a place where they end up eating and drinking? Won't the damage done by the food and drinks cancel out the good done by the exercise? I think the answer to both questions is, "Not necessarily." You will probably eat anyway. Also, on-foot exercise is accompanied by heavy calorie burning (see the table *Estimated Calories Burned in a 5- or 10-mile Route*). Your calorie-count will end up in much better shape than if you were not exercising at all, giving more leeway for food consumption. Of course, moderation in quantity and judicious selection of nutritious foods should always be followed.

Since we believe there is a correlation between the set of people who really relish a good meal or drink and the set of people who most need more exercise, we do not feel anyone should shy away from the food-and-drink motivation angle. A little extra indulgence in the food and drink department is a perfectly reasonable inducement to exercise, especially if you *only* allow yourself the indulgence if you do the exercise first.

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Body Weight:	110 lb. (50 Kg.)	150 lb. (68 Kg.)	190 lb. (86 Kg.)
Walking 5 miles	380	500	650
Jogging 5 miles	392	530	674
Running 5 miles	432	567	708
Walking 10 miles	760	1000	1300
Jogging 10 miles	783	1060	1348
Running 10 miles	864	1134	1416

Estimated Calories Burned in a 5- or 10-mile Route

Assumed speeds: Walking 3.0 mph, Jogging 5.2 mph, Running 7.5 mph³

Consequently, one theme you will find in this book is the idea of ending each route near a good eating and drinking establishment, where you can wind down if you so choose. We tend to look for pub-restaurants—places that will happily accept people in running gear and a little sweaty. We look out, in particular, for top-notch Irish pubs that have interesting character, along with good food, drink, and company. That is not essential, though. There are many other quality eating and drinking establishments in U.S. cities that satisfy the basic requirement.

If you have no need for food and drink exercise motivators, please ignore our references to restaurants and pubs.

* * * *

Having pinned down all these important positive attributes of good on-foot routes, we decided to select several U.S. cities and try to find two or more routes in each that satisfy all of the criteria outlined above. In describing these routes, we also try to provide helpful information for those readers who want to devise their own

³ Figures computed from data in: Maria Adams, MS, MPH, RD, “The Benefits and Risks of Walking Versus Running,” HealthGate <http://www.somersetmedicalcenter.com/110324.cfm>. Note, however, that calorie burn rate depends on many factors including, but not limited to, amount of skeletal muscle, running efficiency, speed, surface type, incline, resting metabolism, level of fitness, and outside temperature. (Thanks to Ayesha Rollinson for explaining this.) Therefore, consider the figures in the table as indicative only.

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routes in those cities, without necessarily following exactly what we lay out.

We selected 14 of the country’s largest cities, taking into account the likelihood of satisfying our criteria. The list is as follows: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington. We made a point of visiting each city and developing our ideas on foot. We tried and rejected many routes in many cities that did not meet all criteria. A few routes that we felt were just too good to miss we have flagged as *Fun on Foot Classic Routes*.

We generally restrict our route recommendations to the four-to-ten mile range, distances that are not too long for a half-day walk and long enough for a nice run for all but the serious distance runner.



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Some readers will likely enjoy following the exact routes we suggest. However, that is certainly not essential and we expect many of you will take up some of the ideas we present and design your own enjoyable outings around them.

Since you may not want to carry this book around while out on foot, we have produced a one-page summary of each route,

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including map and directions. These summaries are available for printing from our website: [http:// www.funonfoot.com](http://www.funonfoot.com).

If we missed your favorite city or route, I apologize for that. Please email us your ideas about other cities and routes—we shall take your ideas into account in a future book or revision of this one.

One question we often get is what about bikes? Why not cycle these routes? While cycling is a fine fitness activity, we just do not find it very practical when traveling. You are faced with such problems as obtaining a bike, leaving it somewhere safe when you want to go into a restaurant or shop, storing it in the evening, and getting it onto public transit (if that is even possible). Furthermore, we find that many attractive places that are ideal for running or walking do not permit cycling or are just not suitable for cycling. Therefore, while some of our routes use bicycle paths, we do not limit our routes to paths suitable for cycling and, as a consequence, can frequently offer on-footers a superior experience.

Inline skating is closer to on-foot exercise. Some but not all of our routes are suitable for inline skating. In each route description, we try to assess the extent to which inline skating will work.

On that note, let us conclude the lead-in and embark on our tour, focusing on urban on-foot routes with the comfort/attractions/convenience/destination formula as our guiding light. We shall start in the nation’s northeast corner and work generally toward the southwest.








Our main message: Get out on foot, get fit, see interesting places, and—most importantly—have fun!

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City	Violent Criminal Offenses per 1,000 Inhabitants in 2003
San Diego, CA	5.8
Denver, CO	6.2
Seattle, WA	6.8
New York, NY	7.3
San Francisco, CA	7.4
Indianapolis, IN	8.8
Minneapolis, MN	11.9
Boston, MA	12.2
Los Angeles, CA	12.7
Chicago, IL	13.0 ⁴
Dallas, TX	13.7
Philadelphia, PA	13.8
Washington, DC	15.7
Atlanta, GA	19.7

Crime Indexes for Cities Covered

Source: FBI *Crime in the United States*, 2003

.....	Recommended on-foot route	
-----	Major highway	
	Public transit stop (Bus, rail, or subway)	
	Public restroom	
	Public restroom (Seasonal)	
	Drinking water] Omitted on water-plentiful routes
	Drinking water (Seasonal)	
	Casual eating/drinking establishment with good food, suitable for terminating an athletic route	
	Point of interest	

Key To Map Symbols

⁴ Actual Chicago figure may be higher, since forcible rape was not included.