

**BMTS Article Digest**  
**October – November 2020**

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed in the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page of [www.bmtsonline.com](http://www.bmtsonline.com).

Scott

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## **Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) Messenger e-Newsletter**

Go to <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/newsroom/newsletters.cfm>.

Subscribe to the new monthly PBIC Messenger. Send news for future issues to editorial team member Linda Tracy.

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### **Come out and play in Broome County**

Go All Out Broome County is your simple guide to hundreds of places and thousands of acres in your own backyard or just down the road. Easily locate hidden gems and local favorites then map your next outdoor adventure in Broome County. Go to [www.GoAllOutBroome.com](http://www.GoAllOutBroome.com).



Explore more than a dozen state forests, 78 parks or 77 miles of paddle friendly waters. Give our antique carousels a go-round or enjoy a round of golf on courses worthy of professional competition. From challenging trails to hike or bike to riverside strolls or picnics, you can go all out in any way, in every season, in Broome County.

Now you're just a few clicks away from an awesome day.

Are you in? Then go all out in Broome County!

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See the **Two Rivers Greenway Pedestrian & Bicycle Counting Report** for **October** at <http://bmtsonline.com/sites/default/files/October%202020%20Report.pdf>.



## October 2020 Bike/Ped Count Report

**BMTS**



Workers using heavy equipment have moved into a neighborhood park in Endicott's Union District to extend a walking path near the Susquehanna River.

The Chugnut Trail expansion work in

Mercereau Park is being funded in part by a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission.



Crews last week placed stakes throughout the park to mark the route of the future trail. Village employees on Monday were removing soil from sections of the park as part of the project.

Work on a section of a future walking trail in Mercereau Park. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)

The eight-foot-wide path will be developed near East Valley Street, Mercereau Avenue and River Terrace.

Paving of the new trail is expected to be completed soon. Mayor Linda Jackson said the village plans to install lights along the path through the park.

The existing Chugnut river walk runs from a levee east of Vestal Avenue to Riverview Drive.



A section of the expanded Chugnut Trail looking north toward River Terrace on October 19, 2020. (Photo: Bob Joseph/WNBF News)





# State of New York County of Broome Government Offices

## Office for Aging

Jason T. Garnar, County Executive · Lisa M. Schuhle, Director

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(607) 778-2411 [ofa@co.broome.ny.us](mailto:ofa@co.broome.ny.us)

### Broome Age-Friendly Project Action Plan Approved by AARP

(BROOME COUNTY, NY) Broome County Executive Jason Garnar and Office for Aging Director Lisa Schuhle are pleased to announce that through the approval of the Age Friendly Action Plan **Broome County has been accepted into the AARP network of age-friendly communities.**

The Action Plan was developed by engaging citizens, professionals, and government in reviewing community needs data and determining priorities. The Action Plan includes creative and workable solutions to community needs based on the eight domains of livability.

“Our County’s residents are getting older and their needs are changing,” said Broome County Executive Jason Garnar.

“I want to make sure they have a community that changes with them. Thank you to our dedicated staff at the Office for Aging for all their work on this and Broome County will continue to take the lead in coordinating with all our local partners to implement this plan and make it happen.”

With the Action Plan complete and approved by AARP, Broome County will now work to implement its many goals to make age-friendly improvements in our community. Broome County is committed to actively work together toward being a great place to live for people of all ages.

“This project cannot be successful without community partners and everyone working together to make our community a better place to live,” said Broome County Office for Aging Director Lisa Schuhle. “We are looking forward to implementing this exciting plan to make Broome County more age friendly.”

To learn more about the Broome Age-Friendly Project, how to get involved and to access the Needs Assessment Data Report and the full **Action Plan** contact the Broome County Office for Aging:

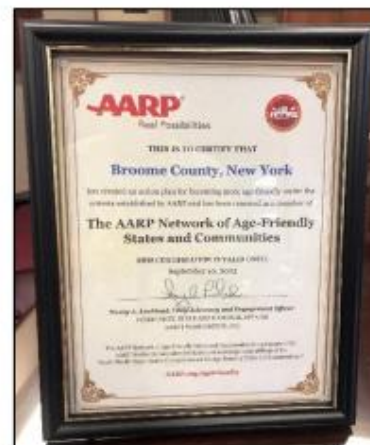
Website – <http://gobroomecounty.com/senior/Age-FriendlyCommunityInformation>

Call – 607-778-2411

Email – [OFA@BroomeCounty.US](mailto:OFA@BroomeCounty.US)

Mail – P.O. Box 1766, Binghamton, NY 13902

The Action Plan is also available in paper form by calling the Office for Aging at 607-778-2411.



# Step Outside: Experts Say That Walking Has Many of the Same Benefits as Running

It turns out there's no need for speed. A long, head-clearing walk brings many of the same benefits—to body, mind, and spirit—as a jog or even a sprint. Lean into this low-impact, all-ages exercise, and unlock the upsides of hitting your stride.

By **Louisa Kamps**

August 27, 2020

As stay-at-home mandates switched on in March to curb the spread of the coronavirus, many people complied by parking on their cans. Fitbit, the company that makes smart activity trackers, shared data a short while later showing that users of its devices across the U.S. were suddenly taking 12 percent fewer steps per day, on average, than they had during the same period in 2019.

In the months since, however, many of us have gotten up off our couches and started going for walks again, since it's a safe way to exercise in fresh air and reconnect with ourselves and others. Science backs up just how good this feels: Getting our steps in, as we love to say, not only can improve cardiovascular fitness, muscle tone, balance, and blood-sugar regulation; it also helps protect long-term cognitive function, reduces depression, and helps us think more creatively.

In fact, a 2014 study by researchers at Stanford University found that walkers were significantly better than sedentary folk at finding innovative ways to solve problems, both while walking and immediately afterward, because the movement appeared to increase divergent thinking. In other words, it counts as real exercise, and comes with the same positive—and potentially transformative—gains.



If you haven't strutted your stuff in a while, or want to get in on the action, read on for the path to success.

## **1. Treat the Road Like Your Runway**

Considering that so many of us have been working from home this year, curled over laptops perched on coffee tables and kitchen counters, Michele Kehrner, founder and CEO of Balance Chicago, is not surprised that she and other physical therapists are hearing more complaints of back and neck pain. Thankfully, walking is an efficient way to undo the knots, both physical and emotional, that we twist ourselves into. Striding "with your shoulders back and your head over your shoulders will help your breathing and your posture," says Kehrner. It can also improve digestion, since slumping forward increases

pressure on the abdomen, which pushes stomach acid upward, potentially leading to heartburn. Work up to a brisk clip, arms swinging at your sides, and you'll feel calmer faster, too; escalating your pace reduces stress hormones and increases the flow of feel-good endorphins in your brain. If you are working from home, Kehrner suggests bookending your "office" hours with two outings lasting 20 to 30 minutes each, or average commute length. "Walking twice a day, for about 10 minutes out and 10 minutes back, will automatically put your body in better alignment and clear your head," she says. "It's a great way to symbolically mark the start and end of your day."

## **2. Play the Numbers Game**

For years, we've heard that 10,000 steps (about five miles) is the ideal amount to take every day. But a study from the National Cancer Institute, National Institute on Aging, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published earlier this year showed otherwise: A good goal is actually one that's relative to your starting point. The researchers, led by epidemiologists Charles Matthews, PhD, and Pedro Saint-Maurice, PhD, of the National Cancer Institute, found that for people getting a low number of steps per day (around 4,000 or fewer), taking just 4,000 more significantly reduced their risk of premature death from all causes. Those who walked 8,000 steps a day were about 50 percent less likely to die prematurely than those who took 4,000. And 12,000-steppers were almost 65 percent less likely to die prematurely than 4,000-step-pers.

Don't worry—this doesn't mean you should keep aiming for more, *ad infinitum*; just try to go the extra mile (or two). "As their health allows, adults should aim to move more, sit less, and take more steps per day," says Matthews. Using a step-logging device—whether an app on your phone, a smartwatch, a digital tracker, or an old-school pedometer—makes it easy to clock them, even while doing yard work or pinballing around the kitchen as you cook. But because the best devices still may have about a 10 percent margin of error, Shane O'Mara, professor of experimental brain research at Trinity College Dublin and author of the new book *In Praise of Walking* (\$20.49, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)), shares the mental trick he uses to meet his goal: Assume your tracker is counting 10 percent too much, and keep going.



### 3. Supercharge Your Stroll

If you think power walking is an oxymoron (or a hilarious '80s trend), think again: Hustling not only helps you burn more calories, but tones your muscles as you go. Before starting any new exercise program, it's wise to get the go-ahead from your doctor, says Ashley Borden, an American Council on Exercise-certified master trainer and lifestyle consultant in Los Angeles. After you've done that, find shoes that give you solid arch and ankle support. Ideally, visit a sporting-goods store with salespeople trained to analyze gait; when shopping online, search for a pair that suits your arch, whether it's high or flat. Then start with intervals. Cover one block at a swift clip that has you panting, the next block at a moderate pace, and keep alternating. This will improve your cardiovascular capacity and quickly increase the distance you can cover without flagging.

Ready for more? Head to the nearest hill for some hardcore inclines. "Really marching up them, pitched slightly forward, pulling your elbows back and pushing off the first and second toe of your back foot," will target your glutes and hamstrings even better than flat running, says Borden. To get sweatier still, try adding a few pounds: She suggests loading up your torso or arms (not your legs) with a weighted backpack or sleeves, such as those by Wearable Weights (\$129, [wearableweights.com](https://wearableweights.com)); they won't torque your wrists the way carrying hand weights can, or add to the burden on your joints and hip flexors like calf or ankle weights. By wearing the form-fitting sleeves, which are "friggin' awesome," Borden adds, "you can do biceps curls or lateral raises, or exaggerate your arms' swinging motion to activate your lats and engage your torso."

### 4. Sync Up with Others

Navigating sidewalks and parkways on foot in these days of social distancing can require some graceful do-si-dos—a few steps back, to the left or right, then forward again. But there's nothing, uh, pedestrian about the lift we get from walking alongside other people, even with masks securely on. Per O'Mara, social walking—marching with your buddies and loved ones, an ancient human habit that arguably has led to our success and survival as a



species—provides tremendously reassuring proof, as our footsteps start to fall into rhythm with our companions', that we are not alone. "The double-whammy benefit we get from walking together comes partly from movement itself, but also the engagement" from communicating, with words or unconscious signals, what's on our minds as we move. "You know the old saying, 'A problem shared is a problem halved?'" O'Mara adds. "It turns out that kind of sharing is important to us. We are social beings."

## **5. Circle Back to Yourself**

If getting lost in a podcast or bumping reggaeton gives you happy feet, Godspeed. But tuning into your environment is another way walking can make you feel more centered and whole. A growing body of research shows that tramping through nature helps reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, and improve concentration. Set out with the intention of noticing your surroundings, no matter what they are, and odds are you'll return feeling refreshed. First, silence your phone and stick it in your pocket. That way, it can count your steps but otherwise leave you unbugged. Then tune into the rustle of the wind, the sound of the birds, or whatever captures your attention. You may get lost in thoughts or worries, but just keep bringing your focus back to what's around you, says Heather Sorensen, co-manager of the UW Health Mindfulness Program, in Madison, Wisconsin. This is especially helpful if you're feeling too agitated and jittery to sit and meditate. Walking mindfully can provide "a gentle entry into the present moment and help your nervous system calm down," says Sorensen. "When I take a walk and just allow myself to travel across space and vary my pace, pausing to look at whatever bird or tree intrigues me, I feel better."

## **Walks to Remember**

To bank your daily quota in natural beauty, head for [scenic routes](#) we've culled here—all are accessible by car, and long enough to clock at least five miles (or 10,000 steps). First up? West Coast natives should bookmark the four-mile-long Estero Bluffs State Park Trail in Cayucos, California, which is just off Highway 1. It offers sweeping views of the Pacific on one side (look out for whales) and waving salt grass, sagebrush, and wildflowers on the

other. Before you head back to your car, scuttle down to investigate the tide pools. As for those in the midwest? In the 1830s and '40s, workers hand-dug a waterway to connect Lake Michigan to the Illinois River and on to the Mississippi. You won't see steamships tooting up and down it today as you amble the green, 15-mile Illinois & Michigan Canal State Trail in La Salle, Illinois, but you can discover its history and say hi to the herons and beavers that call it home.

If you're headed south, the 13-mile Riverwalk winds through Chattanooga, a town along the Tennessee River, so you're never far from a restroom or an iced coffee. To venture into wilder, more challenging terrain, start at the south end, where it links to the Guild Trail and epic Lookout Mountain. **And if you're from the Big Apple and are looking for a retreat, consider this: A world away from nearby Manhattan, the paved Bronx River Pathway follows its namesake under wooden bridges and past waterfalls to the marvel that is the 307-foot-tall Kensico Dam in Valhalla, New York. To really work your glutes, bob up and down the 179 steps on the western side.** *(Scott Reigle's emphasis – I've walked this many times!)*

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## Federal Court Rules NYC Discriminates Against Blind and Low Vision Pedestrians by Failing to Make Crosswalk Signals Accessible

[Click here for case documents](#) Yellow accessible pedestrian signal on a pole on a sidewalk, via [Wikimedia](#)

*Court Decision will Dramatically Remake NYC's Streetscape by Making Pedestrian Safety Accessible to People with Disabilities - Read the decision [here](#)*

**New York, NY** – In a decision that will remake the streetscape of New York City and improve safety and accessibility for all New Yorkers, a federal court ruled today that New York City's

failure to provide accessible pedestrian signals (APS) at 96.6 % of its signalized intersections violates the civil rights of people with disabilities. APS are push-button devices attached to crosswalks that convey visual crossing information in audible and vibro-tactile formats accessible to blind, low vision, and Deafblind pedestrians.

New York City has over 13,200 signalized intersections with signals for sighted pedestrians that convey critical safety information: WALK or DON'T WALK. Yet only 443 of those 13,200 intersections—less than 4%—have APS that convey this information to blind people. Blind and low vision pedestrians are put in danger every time they must cross a street without APS, because they may cross against the light, in the path of cars. Additionally, the lack of APS denies them their independence and dignity. Plaintiffs have been grabbed by well-meaning strangers attempting to help them across the street, and forced to cross only in crowds and wait several lights—sometimes as long as twenty minutes—to make sure they are crossing with others. Some have avoided walking altogether by taking buses and getting out a stop early or a stop late in order to avoid particularly unsafe intersections, or taking longer routes.

Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) filed this class action lawsuit, *American Council of the Blind of New York, et al. v. New York City*, in June 2018 because this unlawful system denies blind and low vision pedestrians their independence to navigate city streets safely: to visit friends and family; go to work, school, or home; or shop or do business. On July 22, 2019, the Court certified a class of blind and low vision pedestrians harmed by these practices.

“For decades New York City has ignored the needs of blind and low vision pedestrians, while simultaneously touting its Vision Zero commitments to pedestrian safety,” said Torie Atkinson, Staff Attorney at Disability Rights Advocates. “The city has spent millions on pedestrian safety improvements, and now for the first time those improvements will be accessible to all New Yorkers. With accessible pedestrian signals, blind and low vision pedestrians can cross the street confidently, and we are thrilled with the dramatic changes that this victory will mean not only for those who are blind or low vision, but for all New Yorkers who want safer streets.”

“ACBNY has tirelessly advocated for decades to fix New York City’s widespread inaccessibility to blind and Deafblind pedestrians,” said Lori Scharff of the American Council of the Blind of New York, plaintiff in this case. “We are pleased that the Court’s ruling will help ensure that our blind and Deafblind constituents have equal access to the same information available to sighted pedestrians.”

“As someone who is Deafblind and requires tactile information to cross streets safely, I am thrilled by the Court’s ruling,” said plaintiff Christina Curry. “Up until now, at least once a day I almost get hit by a car because there is no APS telling me when it is safe to cross. This victory means that finally the city will have to install APS so that I and tens of thousands of Deafblind New Yorkers will have access to street crossing information and be able to travel safely, freely, and independently throughout the city.”

Plaintiffs do not seek money damages. They seek only that New York City’s street crossings be accessible to and safer for blind and low vision pedestrians.

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## Police Urge Drivers to Stop for Pedestrians

ALBANY COUNTY

by: Jamie DeLine

Posted: Oct 28, 2020 / 11:30 PM EDT / Updated: Oct 29, 2020 / 12:08 PM EDT

<https://www.news10.com/news/albany-county/police-urge-drivers-to-stop-for-pedestrians/>

ALBANY, N.Y. ([NEWS10](#)) — With Halloween only a few days away, it is important to be on the lookout for people crossing the streets. This week is also Pedestrian Safety Enforcement Week.

In Washington Park on Wednesday afternoon, NEWS10's Jamie DeLine joined Albany Police Sgt. Joshua Laiacona, undercover to see if drivers were obeying traffic laws. Cameras were rolling as a car failed to stop for them in a cross walk.

"If a pedestrian is in the crosswalk, we have to stop for them," said Sgt. Laiacona. "As we have seen today, that doesn't always happen."

In the span of two hours, a total of eight drivers received failure to yield tickets. One was even caught speeding.

Today's operation was all a part of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee's "See and Be Seen" Campaign.

Sgt. Laiacona shared this reminder to drivers as to when they should stop before a crosswalk:

"A good rule of thumb is 10 to 15 feet for sure, but they should be slowing down as they approach the crosswalk and come to a complete stop. And wait for the pedestrian to be completely out of the crosswalk."

However, it's not just drivers that can get tickets. Pedestrians can get them, too, for jaywalking.

Albany Police say when it comes to safety, it's a two-way street—both pedestrians and drivers need to pay attention.

"We are out here today because it is enforcement week, but we do this all the time, all year," explained Laiacona. "We address this and we take pedestrian safety seriously because our unit, specifically the traffic safety unit, see the consequences when people don't obey this law. When people don't follow the rules of the road, people do get hurt and killed sometimes."

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