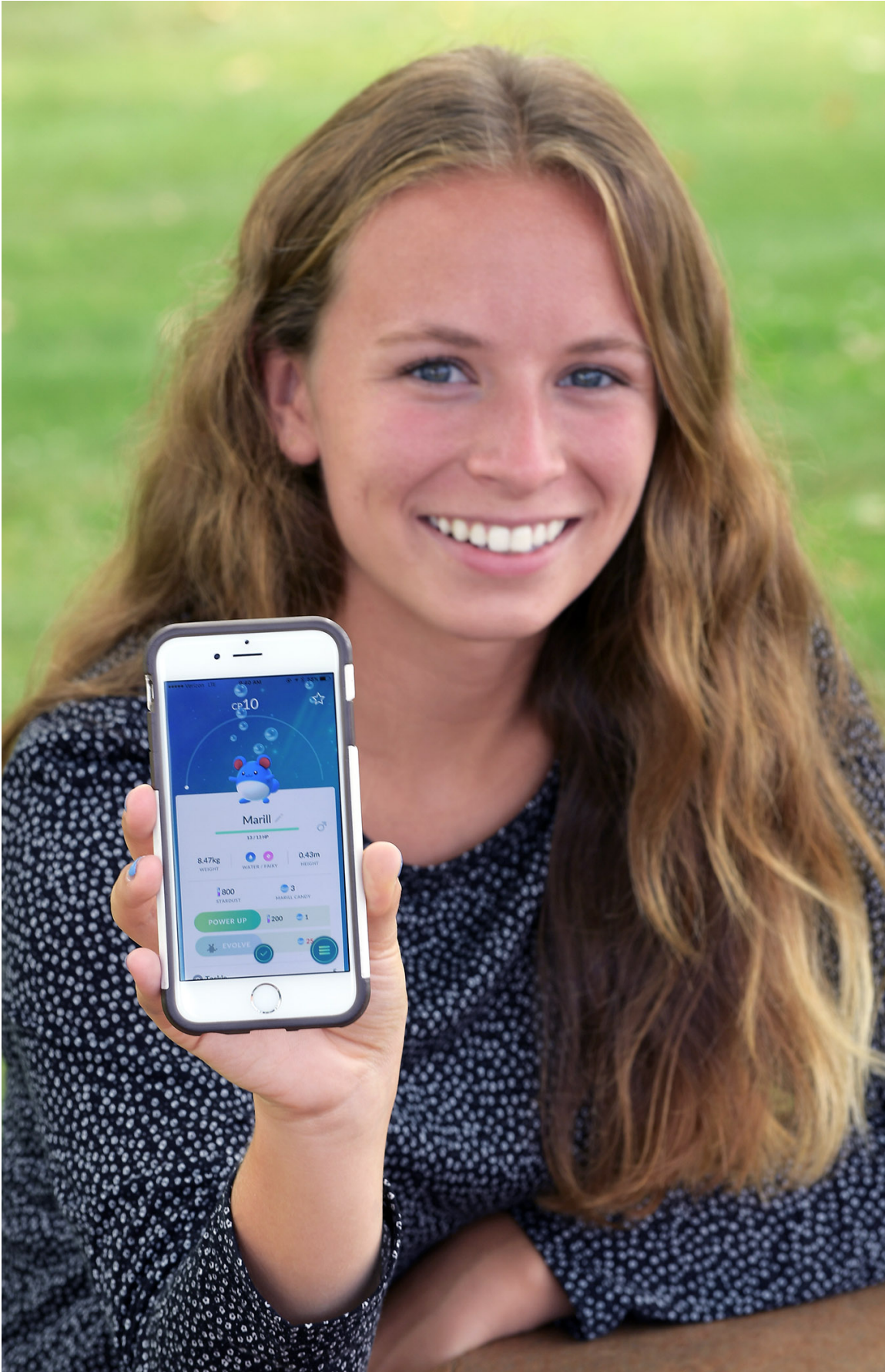


Researchers study link between Pokemon GO and a healthier lifestyle

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Kent State researchers study a link between using physically-interactive smartphone apps, such as Pokémon GO, and an increase in physical activity.
Credit: Kent State University

Today marks the one year anniversary of Pokémon GO's worldwide release that sent crowds hiking through parks, meandering into streets and walking for miles in search of Pokémon, those cute little digital characters that appear in real locations on your smartphone.

Capturing the little monsters isn't just fun for the players, it might be good for their health. Too often we sit at a desk all day, spend countless hours in the car, and with a smartphone glued to our hands it is too easy to spend our free time watching videos, playing games and browsing the internet. Such sedentary behaviors cause us to sit more and exercise less.

However, Kent State University researchers found that playing a popular physically-interactive, smartphone based [game](#), like Pokémon GO, may actually promote exercise.

Jacob Barkley, Ph.D., Andrew Lepp, Ph.D., and Ellen Glickman, Ph.D., from Kent State's College of Education, Health and Human Services assessed the ability of the popular, physically-interactive, smartphone based video game Pokémon GO to increase walking and decrease [sedentary behavior](#), like sitting. Over 350 college students reported their physical activity and sedentary behavior the week before they downloaded Pokémon GO, the week immediately after downloading the game, and again several weeks later.

Results show that, relative to the week before downloading Pokémon

GO, students doubled their daily walking behavior (102 percent increase) and reduced sedentary behavior by 25 percent during the first week after downloading. When comparing behavior several weeks after downloading Pokémon GO, to the week before downloading, walking and sedentary [behavior](#) was still 68 percent greater and 18 percent lower, respectively, even though frequency of game play decreased by 58 percent.

"While the largest increases in walking and decreases in sitting occurred during the first week after downloading, when the game was new to the user, those positive effects largely persisted weeks later," Barkley said. "It is possible that games like Pokémon GO may help people initiate a positive [health behavior change](#), such as more daily walking and less sitting."

The researchers suggest that while many smartphone functions may promote [sedentary activity](#), they are hopeful that playing physically-interactive, smartphone based video games like Pokémon GO may help promote walking and reduce sitting in [college students](#).

The study is published in the *Games for Health Journal*.

More information: Jacob E. Barkley et al, "Pokémon Go!" May Promote Walking, Discourage Sedentary Behavior in College Students, *Games for Health Journal* (2017). [DOI: 10.1089/g4h.2017.0009](https://doi.org/10.1089/g4h.2017.0009)

Provided by Kent State University

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