

Why are people on TikTok talking about going for a 'fart walk'? A gastroenterologist weighs in

June 26 2024, by Vincent Ho



Credit: Magda Ehlers from Pexels

"Fart walks" have become a cultural phenomenon, after a woman named Mairlyn Smith posted online a now-viral video about how she and her

husband go on walks about 60 minutes after dinner and release their gas.

Smith, known on TikTok as @mairlynthequeenoffibre and @mairlynsmith on Instagram, has since appeared on myriad TV and press interviews extolling the benefits of a fart walk. Countless TikTok and Instagram users and have now shared their own experiences of feeling better after taking up the #fartwalk habit.

So what's the evidence behind the fart walk? And what's the best way to do it?

Exercise can help get the gas out

We know exercise can help relieve bloating by getting gas moving and out of our bodies.

Researchers from Barcelona, Spain in 2006 [asked](#) eight patients complaining of bloating, seven of whom had irritable bowel syndrome, to avoid "gassy" foods such as beans for two days and to fast for eight hours before their study.

Each patient was asked to sit in an armchair, in order to avoid any effects of body position on the movement of gas. Gas was pumped directly into their small bowel via a thin plastic tube that went down their mouth, and the gas expelled from the body was collected into a bag via a tube placed in the rectum. This way, the researchers could determine how much gas was retained in the gut.

The patients were then asked to pedal on a modified exercise bike while remaining seated in their armchairs.

The researchers found that much less gas was retained in the patients' gut when they exercised. They determined exercise probably helped the

movement and release of intestinal gas.

Walking may have another bonus; it may trigger a [nerve reflex](#) that helps propel foods and gas contents through the gut.

Walking can also [increase internal abdominal pressure](#) as you use your [abdominal muscles](#) to stay upright and balance as you walk. This pressure on the colon helps to push intestinal gas out.

Proper fart walk technique

One [study](#) from Iran studied the effects of walking in 94 individuals with bloating.

They asked participants to carry out ten to 15 minutes of slow walking (about 1,000 steps) after eating lunch and dinner. They filled out gut symptom questionnaires before starting the program and again at the end of the four week program.

The researchers found walking after meals resulted in improvements to gut symptoms such as belching, farting, bloating and abdominal discomfort.

Now for the crucial part: in the Iranian study, there was a particular way in which participants were advised to walk. They were asked to clasp hands together behind their back and to flex their neck forward.

The clasped hands posture leads to more internal abdominal pressure and therefore more gentle squeezing out of gas from the colon. The flexed neck posture decreases the swallowing of air during walking.

This therefore is the proper fart walk technique, based on science.

What about constipation?

A fart walk can help with constipation.

One study involved middle aged inactive patients with chronic constipation, who did a [12 week program](#) of brisk walking at least 30 minutes a day—combined with 11 minutes of strength and flexibility exercises.

This program, the researchers found, improved constipation symptoms through reduced straining, less hard stools and more complete evacuation.

It also appears that the more you walk the better the benefits for gut symptoms.

In patients with [irritable bowel syndrome](#), [one study](#) increasing the daily step count to 9,500 steps from 4,000 steps led to a 50% reduction in the severity of their symptoms.

And just 30 minutes of a fart walk [has been shown](#) to improve blood sugar levels after eating.

What if I can't get outside the house?

If getting outside the house after dinner is impossible, could you try walking slowly on a treadmill or around the house for 1,000 steps?

If not, perhaps you could borrow an idea from the Barcelona research: sit back in an armchair and pedal using a modified exercise bike. Any type of exercise is better than none.

Whatever you do, don't be a couch potato! [Research](#) has found more leisure screen time is linked to a greater risk of developing gut diseases.

We also know [physical inactivity](#) during leisure time and eating irregular meals [are linked](#) to a higher risk of abdominal pain, bloating and altered bowel motions.

Try the fart walk today

It may not be for everyone but this simple physical activity does have good evidence behind it. A fart walk can improve common symptoms such as bloating, abdominal discomfort and constipation.

It can even help [lower blood sugar levels](#) after eating.

Will you be trying a fart walk today?

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