

Play 'Pokemon go' without landing in the ER

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(HealthDay)—Here a Pokemon, there a Pokemon, everywhere a Pokemon!

Just about every millennial seems to be out and about with a smartphone in pursuit of digital monsters via the "Pokemon Go" game. But players distracted by their smartphones risk injury from mishaps like walking into traffic or tripping over a curb.

How can you be safe and still get a burst of activity by playing "Pokemon Go" in public places? The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons is offering advice through its "Digital Deadwalker" campaign.

"We love that these games are bringing children and adults outdoors and encouraging exercise," Dr. Alan Hilibrand, a Philadelphia orthopedic surgeon, said in an academy news release. "But we also want everyone to be mindful of their surroundings as they enjoy this activity. Walking while looking at your phone or electronic device can result in sprains, broken bones and other serious, even fatal, injuries."

Almost 40 percent of Americans have seen an incident caused by distracted walking, according to a recent academy study. About one in four have been in one themselves. Seventy-eight percent of adults call distracted walking a "serious" issue, but less than a third say they usually or always walk while distracted themselves.

The academy offers these tips to avoid a mishap when you're on the "Pokemon Go"—on foot:

- Focus on everything around you: People, objects, obstacles.
- Keep your eyes on your surroundings instead of your phone when you cross into traffic or enter an intersection.
- Be careful when you cross streets and wait for a traffic light if possible. Watch for pedestrians, cars and bikes.
- When you reach a curb, look up. Don't look down. Use the same level of caution when you're in the middle of intersections.

- Stop and get out of the way of other pedestrians if you need to use your cellphone or talk to the person next to you.
- If you're wearing headphones, set the volume low enough so you can still hear traffic and things around you.

"Pokemon Go" is a free "augmented reality" game that lets players use their phone's camera to capture, train and trade virtual Pokemon characters that can appear without warning in a real-world setting.

But the wildly popular game—the top grossing app on iTunes, less than a week after its release—is so enthralling that players are unintentionally placing themselves in harm's way. Unanticipated consequences include sprained ankles, bruises from [walking](#) into [traffic](#), trees and lamp posts, risky driving and even some robberies, according to reports from across the United States.

More information: For more on pedestrian safety, visit the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).

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