

The writer has posted comments on the article on pages 20, 23-26, 31-32, 34-35.

Why girls should walk to school (Thinkstock photos/Getty Images)

Adolescent girls who walk to school show better cognitive performance than those who travel by bus or car, a new study suggests.

Moreover, cognitive performance is also better in girls who take more than 15 minutes than in those who live closer and have a shorter walk to school.

The results come from findings of the nationwide AVENA (Food and Assessment of the Nutritional Status of Spanish Adolescents) study, in which the University of Granada has participated together with the Autonomous University of Madrid, University of Zaragoza and the Spanish [National Research Council](#) in Madrid.

The researchers affirm that, during adolescence, "the plasticity of the brain is greater than at any other time of life, which makes it the opportune period to stimulate cognitive function".

However, paradoxically, adolescence is the time of life that sees the greatest decline in physical activity, and this is greater in girls.

Therefore, the authors of the study think that "inactive adolescents could be [missing](#) out on a very important stimulus to improve their learning and cognitive performance".

"Commuting to school on foot is a healthy daily habit, which contributes to keeping the adolescent active during [the rest](#) of the day and encourages them to participate in physical and [sports](#) activities. This boosts the expenditure of energy and, all in all, leads to a better state of health," Palma Chillon, researcher in the Department of Physical and Sports Education of the University of Granada, and David Martinez-Gomez, of the Department of Physical and Sports Education and Human Movement (Faculty of Teacher Training and Education) of the Autonomous University of Madrid, who have both participated in the study, said.

The study is published in *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*.

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