The benefits of walking and hiking

Hiking can be enjoyed by people of all ages with a clean bill of health. One can begin hiking at any age. For elderly people, walking is often the only available method of exercise that helps to improve and maintain health.

Walking is very beneficial for the respiratory and cardiovascular systems: the blood oxygenates the vital organs more rapidly, and at the same time cholesterol is decreased.

There are also has beneficial effects on the digestive tract. Taking a walk eases the digestion of food and helps to eliminate toxins from the body. Evening walks can also contribute to good sleep.

A great natural antidepressant, walking reduces stress and is uplifting and energising.

Hiking is a great way to take off excess weight, and also significantly slows the ageing process.

The most important rules are:

- **Regularity**
  - Walk regularly, regardless of the time of year or the weather.

- **Pleasure**
  - Walking should be fun, not a source of pain or discomfort.

- **Pace**
  - Increase your stamina gradually by starting out on easy terrain over short distances and working up from there.

- **Duration**
  - A good walk should typically last at least 30 to 40 minutes.

Walking is the simplest and most affordable way to improve your health. All that is needed in addition are proper nutrition, good hygiene and sound sleep!
One simple way to improve the efficiency of your car is to increase the number of passengers. Single-occupant vehicles are the least energy efficient, so share your rides with family members or give colleagues a lift to work.
The benefits of cycling

Compared to travelling by car, cycling benefits both the cyclist and society as a whole in a number of ways:

**Produces zero emissions**
Cycling is easier on the environment as it produces very little noise and no harmful emissions.

**Makes space for greenery**
The promotion of cycling can help cities to preserve their historical and cultural monuments, due to its compatibility with green spaces.

**Needs minimal infrastructure**
As smaller paved areas are needed for travel and parking, cycling contributes to the more efficient use of urban spaces.

**Creates friendly cities**
Having fewer cars on the roads improves the appearance of town centres and allows better pedestrian access to shops, entertainment venues and community and cultural centres.

**Cuts congestion**
Going by bike helps to eliminate traffic jams and the related economic losses due to stalled vehicles, late arrival at work and general air pollution.

**Lets the traffic flow**
Reducing the number of cars on the road increases the average speed of other road users, including public transport vehicles.
**Boosts the buses**
With fewer people driving cars, there is scope to improve the volume and capacity of public transport services.

**Keeps you in touch**
Cycling keeps you connected to your local community and gives you easy access to amenities and services.

**Improves resource efficiency**
Relief from the need to transport children to and from school saves parents time and money.

**Gets you there faster**
Bicycles can travel faster than other modes of transport over short distances.

**Eases family finances**
Changing to bikes means families can get rid of their second car, easing the family budget as a result of savings on fuel and lubricants, maintenance, repairs, insurance etc.
Vehicles and the environment

The negative impacts of motor vehicle transport on the environment are obvious. Internal combustion engines burn huge amounts of oil products, releasing various hazardous substances into the air:

- **Carbon monoxide** — This extremely toxic gas poses a risk to the environment and to humans. Carbon monoxide affects the cortex of the human brain, causing irreversible damage to the nervous system.
- **Solid particles** — If inhaled, these particles penetrate the lungs and remain there permanently, causing respiratory diseases and cancer. They also damage water reservoirs and plant growth.

- **Nitrogen oxides** — In contact with moist surfaces such as the lining of the respiratory tract, nitrogen oxides form nitric acid that can damage the respiratory system.
- **Sulphur dioxide** — This highly toxic substance is harmful to all warm-blooded creatures. In humans it can cause kidney failure, heart failure and cardiovascular impairment. Sulphur dioxide corrodes metal objects and can destroy building structures.
- **Hydrogen sulphide** — This toxic, suffocating gas causes neurodevelopmental disorders, damages the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, and can be fatal.
- **Aromatic hydrocarbons** — Emitted into the atmosphere as a result of the incomplete combustion of fuel and from fumes from engines and petrol stations, these toxic elements can have serious harmful effects on the human body.
- **Benzopyrene** — This carcinogen causes human cells to mutate.
- **Formaldehyde** — A highly toxic substance, formaldehyde affects the human nervous system.

One of the dangers of burning oil products is that the effects are not immediately visible. Harmful substances accumulate in the human body over time, and many remain permanently. Some of the impacts appear only after some years, by which time the damage is irreversible. As some of the associated diseases are hereditary, they may become more common in successive generations.

The noise produced by car engines also has a strong negative impact on human beings, causing fatigue and exacerbating a variety of mental and nervous disorders. Constant exposure to noise makes it difficult for people to sleep, rest or work productively. Some scientists argue that such constant exposure to noise can significantly reduce a person's life expectancy.

Transport infrastructure, comprising roads, ports, garages, depots and parking areas, can never be neutral with respect to the environment. This land could potentially be used for many other, more environmentally friendly purposes.