

Text, Walk & Work



Germans give walkers, distracted by texting, the nickname of "smombies" for smart phone plus zombie. Washington Post newspaper uses the word "deadwalkers" and adds that as many as 60% of walkers today are distracted by talking, reading, or texting. Smombies, deadwalkers, or distracted walkers have become a public safety issue, and symptom of an addiction. Deborah Hersman, National Safety Council, said, "We're dealing with addiction to electronic devices. When something beeps or buzzes or dings or vibrates, it really is as compelling to answer as someone tapping you on the shoulder. People are being trained to engage in these activities, and people get immediate joy. Our brains get a hit of dopamine (chemical in the brain that makes a person feel good) every time we open a message."

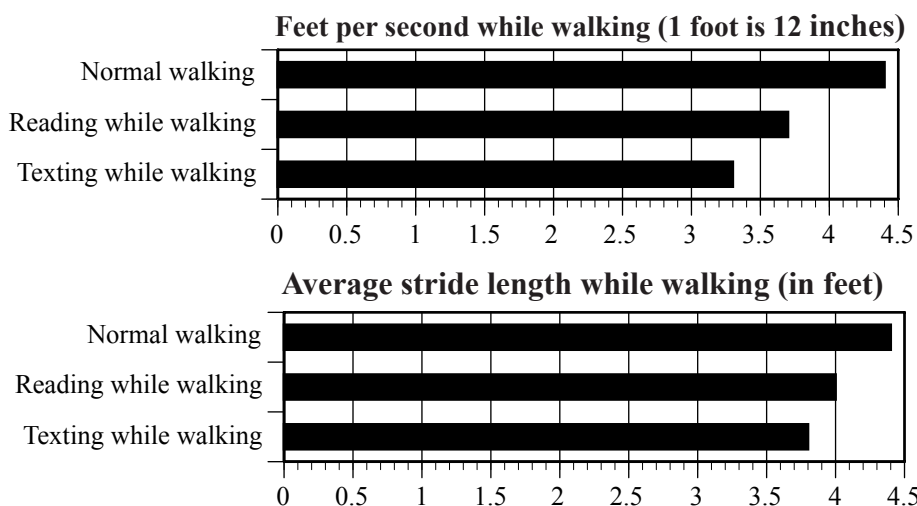
When a person reads or texts on a smart phone when walking, his or her **speed and step length** changes. Also, **body sway and arm swing used for balance** is thrown off because the walker keeps the head down, neck immobile (stiff), and arms locked at the side.

Reading and texting on a smart phone leads to walking into people, into walls, in front of cars, or falling due to loss of balance. Since 2006, emergency room visits for distracted walkers using smart phones have increased over 550%.

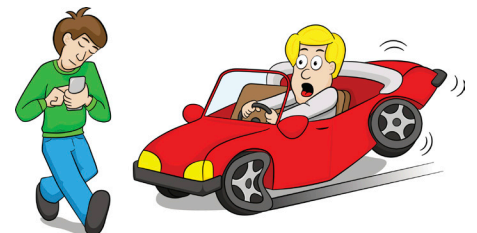
To help walkers stay safe: a) San Francisco company hires security guards to guard the entrance to their parking structure to make sure distracted workers are not stepping into the driveway when a worker's car is entering or leaving. b) Company in the Netherlands (Holland) is making "street-embedded pedestrian (walker) lights" called "glowing crosswalks." LED lights on the border of a sidewalk and intersection, glowing green or red, let walkers know when to walk or stop. c) Some cities give tickets to walkers who text while in a crosswalk.



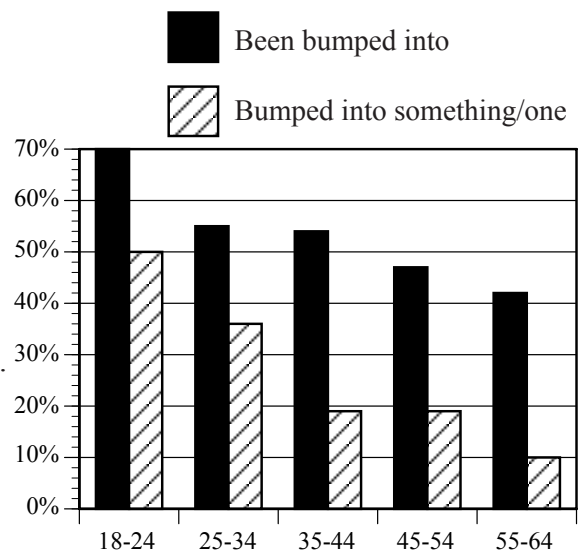
Accidents while using smart phones: 1) Cause workers to miss one or more workdays due to injury recovery. 2) Cause the employer loss of productivity (completed tasks) due the worker's absence. 3) Cause the employer high medical insurance costs due to more workers injured at the job site.



Auto makers save lives by providing seat belts, air bags, automatic braking for drivers. Do smart phone makers need to develop mobile apps with GPS to warn smombies of oncoming cars, stairs, or other hazards?



Percent of smartphone users in each age group who have bumped into something, or been bumped into by others who were distracted by their phone (Pew Research)



Texting Etiquette (Proper Way of Doing) at Work

- **Do not text while walking at work.** Give eye contact to people and say "Good morning" or "Good afternoon."
- **Do not send personal texts.** Let your friends and family know that you will not answer their text during work hours.
- **Follow procedure for texting at work** by reading the employee handbook. Ask your supervisor any questions.
- **Do not text coworkers/supervisor unless important,** and you know this way of communication is OK with them.
- **Do not text during meetings.** Avoid group texting.
- **Show respect** to your coworkers and supervisor time and privacy by keeping your texts brief and not texting them after their business hours.
- **Use emojis carefully** to keep a professional image.
- **Use correct spelling and punctuation.** Avoid all abbreviations that may not be understood by all ages. Write high quality, easy-to-read texts.
- **Use a polite and upbeat tone.** Do not use negative words such as "failure" or "wrong." Use "please," "thank you." To sound friendly, use "our," "we," "us."
- **Never send important or bad news by text.** Call and talk to the person
- **If it takes over 3 texts to answer your question — stop.** Call the person.
- **Proofread all work-related texts** before sending.



QUICK CHECK:

1. What do Germans nickname distracted walkers?
2. a) To what does Hersman say we are addicted? b) What 4 things do smart phones do that is as compelling to answer as someone tapping you on the shoulder? c) What did Hersman say our brains get every time we open a message? d) Do you find it hard to not look or answer when your phone beeps, buzzes, dings, or vibrates? e) Give a reason for your answer.
3. a) What 4 things change or are thrown off when a person reads or texts while walking? b) What happens to the head, neck, and arms?
4. By what percent have emergency room visits increased because of distracted walkers?
5. To help walkers stay safe: a) What does a San Francisco company do? b) What is a company in Holland making? c) What do some cities give to walkers who text in a crosswalk? d) Do you think your city should install green or red glowing crosswalks to help walkers? e) Give a reason for your opinion.
6. What 3 things do work-related accidents due to texting and walking while using phones cause?
7. Graph: What is number of feet per second for: a) Normal walking? b) Texting while walking?
8. What percent of the following age people have been bumped into by distracted walkers: a) 18-24? b) 35-44? c) 55-64
9. What percent of the following age people have bumped into something or someone? a) 18-24? b) 35-44? c) 55-64?
10. a) What do you say when you give eye contact? b) What do you let your friends know? c) What should you read? d) May you text at meetings? e) How do you show respect for time/privacy? f) What should you avoid due to "all ages"? g) List 2 negative words and 3 friendly words. h) Describe 2 times you need to call the person. i) What must you proofread?