

Experts say walking is the first step to fitness. Get it? The experts made a pun resulting in nervous laughter rippling over their faces tanned by the glow of computer screens. And they are right. Walking is the second easiest way to burn calories. Laughing at silly puns is the easiest way, but it takes much longer. 15 minutes of laughter a day will burn 10 to 40 calories. 20 minutes of walking will roughly burn 100 calories. A small Snickers bar has about 200 calories. All that stressful math is making me resort to the comforts of a Snickers bar. I look down at my Instagram-unfriendly waistline and decide to take matters into my own running shoes.

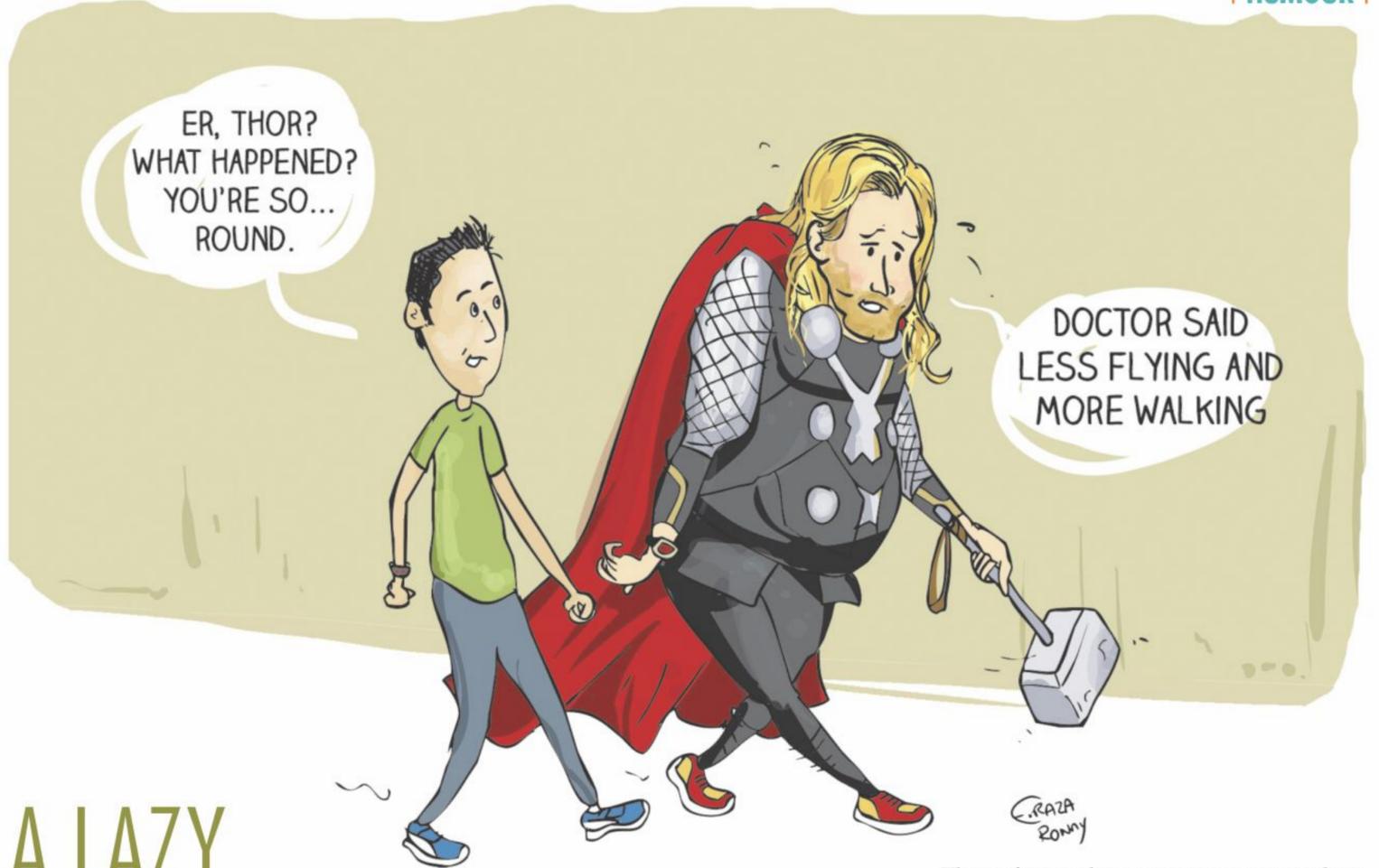
Shall we get to walking then?

That raises many questions. Where do we walk? What time to walk? How to fit this into office schedules? Who are they going to kill off in Game of Thrones Season 7? Is the next season going to be only about dragons because all the main characters are dead? That would be cool.

What is not cool is how hard it is to walk. It should be easy. Even babies can do it. So why don't more people walk? Because walking is also boring. Consider our landscape. Our views consist of cars unsuccessfully trying to get somewhere or walls covered with artsy betel nut spit and forgotten posters. The scenery is uninspiring unless you live around a tree-filled place like Ramna Park. Most of us live everywhere else with no respite from the concrete gloom.

The solution is to embrace it as a challenge. Cut through your boring scenery by considering it a survival course. The footpaths are what I call 'The Social Media Live'. Places surrounding coaching centres become hubs for young people to meet, sit, and eat dubious chotpoti made with water no one knows the origins of. I live in Lalmatia, which might as well be renamed 'The Coaching Neighbourhood.' I need to sidestep mingling students and their vape clouds the way Dwayne Johnson avoids falling rocks and cars in his action movies.

Often you need to walk sideways to squeeze through. Did you know walking sideways can burn 78 percent more



A LAZY MAN'S GUIDE TO WALKING IN DHAKA CITY

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calories than walking forward? It's all about challenging your body to move in unfamiliar ways. Think about it: have you ever seen a chubby, out-of-breath crab?

Consider the other obstacle to walking: 'Death Rally 2017'. If you attempt moving during rush hour, watch out for bikers on footpaths. They often need to balance their bikes by placing their feet on the ground. That simple act enables them to claim the footpath as their own. This is similar to Edmund Hilary setting foot on Mount Everest and claiming it his own. But he didn't really, unlike the bikers.

Then there are the areas I call 'Valleys of Death'. Suburban warriors stand or squat to let loose a stream of territory-marking fluid. Ever played The Floor Is Lava?

This is nothing considering the other obstacle known as 'Ilish in Wonderland'.

This refers to the open sewer covers that provide a direct link to the murky, flowing waters of the river Buriganga. People have reputedly found fish in these sewers hiding from a life of being sold to India. Some of the fish often spoke back. Mostly, they shout, 'Watch out!' a little too late. Avoiding these sewers literally adds a jump in your step. Walking on a rough but level track requires 50 percent more energy than walking on a paved road. That's 50 percent more energy burned!

As you can see, walking is a game of survival. Do it 30 minutes a day and it alleviates depression and fatigue. In retrospect, thinking of walking outside brings on 30 minutes of depression and fatigue. I end up asking my double patty BBQ burger for advice. The burger replies, 'Damned if you walk, damned if you don't.'

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