



Title:

Walking makes Scots happier according to Decathlon analysis

Summary:

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Analysis by Decathlon has found that seven in ten Scots who regularly go walking or hiking consider themselves to be very happy in their lives.

Walking is the most popular activity among Scottish adults and a recent studyⁱ revealed that 71.4 per cent of regular walkers in Scotland are very happy in their lives, compared to the national average of 63.6 per cent. Earlier this year the Scottish Government launched its new national walking strategy 'Let's Get Scotland Walking', which aims to create better walking environments across the country in order to create a 'culture of walking' and encourage Scots to walk more often on a day-to-day basis.

The happiness of Scottish walkers could be partly attributed to the fact that regular hikes appear to help people forget about the pressures of the work environment, with only two in ten Scots stating that they worry about work during their leisure time. And while they may instead choose to channel their thoughts towards scaling some of Scotland's hills and mountainsides, the vast majority of walkers seem less keen on reaching the summit of their careers – with only 15.3 per cent expressing a desire to reach the top of their career ladder.

Just under half (45.1 per cent) of Scottish hiking enthusiasts, meanwhile, consider themselves to have a keen sense of adventure. This is in spite of the fact that Scotland's 'right to roam' law, which enables public access to most land and water, very much opens the door for would-be adventurers.

Scottish walkers aren't the only ones to benefit from the right to roam, however, as 88 per cent of UK visitorsⁱⁱ enjoy long walks and hikes during their trips to Scotland.

Fabien Belfils, Hiking Marketing Manager at Decathlon, said: "It's no secret that Scotland offers some of the most diverse and breath-taking hiking terrain anywhere in the world, so it's great to hear that so many Scottish walkers are happy.

"This is particularly reassuring given that the Scottish Government recently launched The National Walking Strategy in a bid to encourage more people to explore both urban and rural areas by foot.

"Hiking is a great way for people of all ages to stay active; provided that you dress according to the weather conditions, it's something which can be enjoyed throughout the year.

ⁱ Figures retrieved from TGI Surveys 2014

ⁱⁱ Based on stats outlined in the Scottish Government's "Let's Get Scotland Walking" strategy:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0045/00452622.pdf>