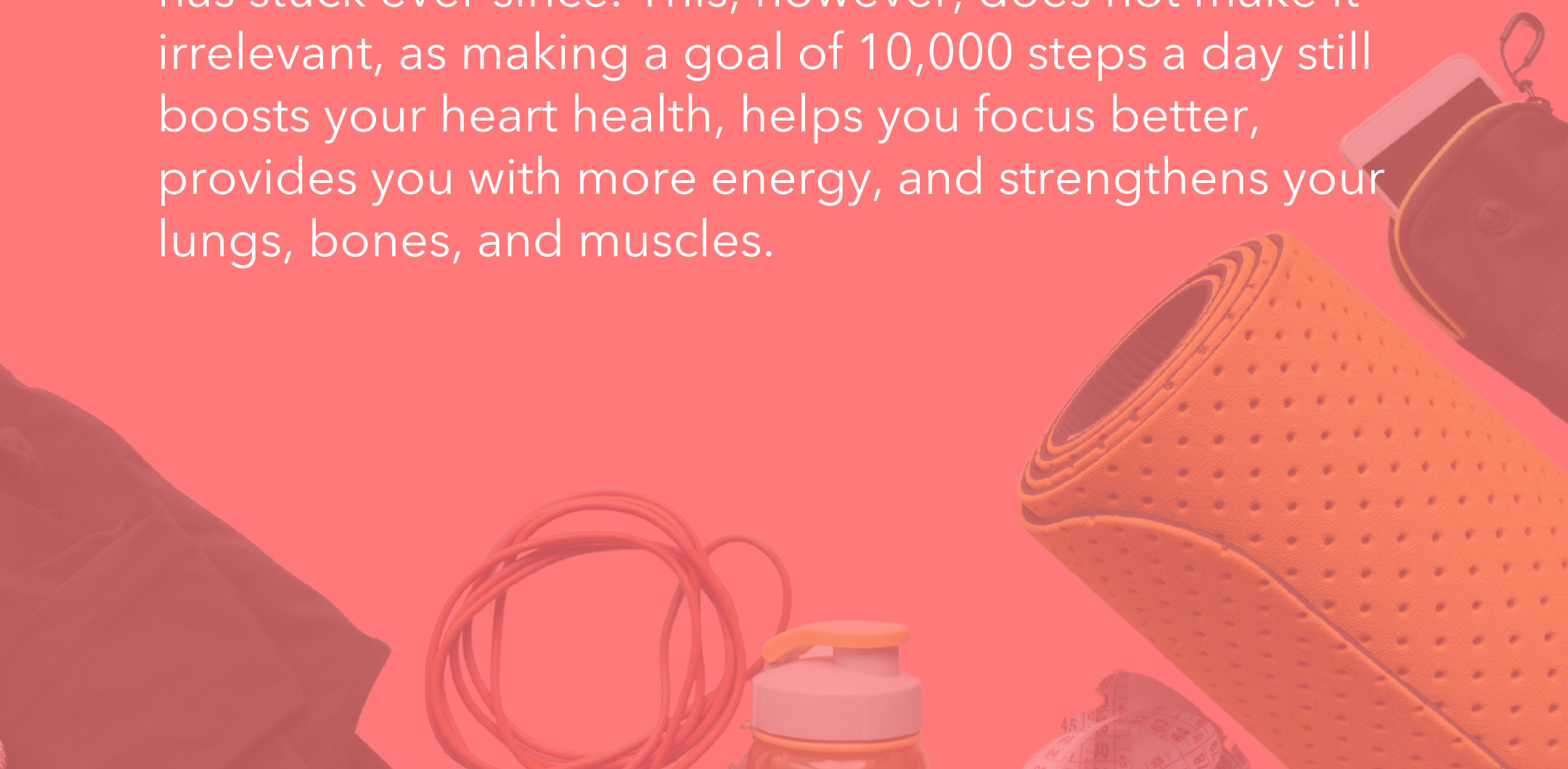


Walk It Out: The Benefits of Walking for Active Recovery

Active recovery isn't just a workout in disguise, active recovery is where you opt for lower intensity exercises to allow your body to recover from the strenuous, higher intensity workouts you have been doing.

- **What's in a number?**

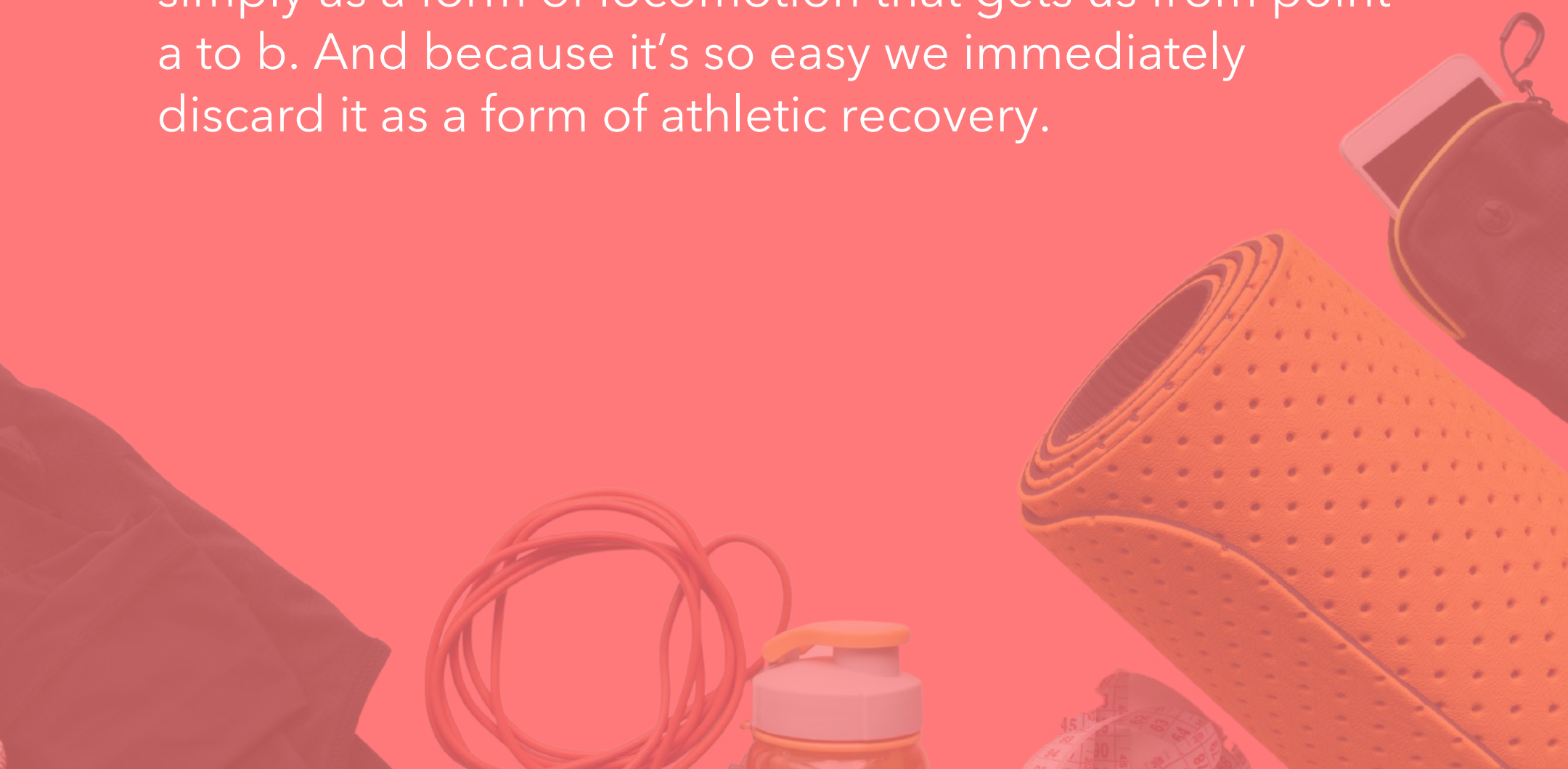
The magical number, 10,000 steps, actually originated in a Japanese marketing campaign in 1965 when a Japanese health science professor invented a pedometer and believed walking 10,000 steps a day would help the Japanese population avoid obesity. He named the pedometer Manpo-Kei, which means 10,000-step metre. The 10,000 steps recommendation has stuck ever since. This, however, does not make it irrelevant, as making a goal of 10,000 steps a day still boosts your heart health, helps you focus better, provides you with more energy, and strengthens your lungs, bones, and muscles.



How to get started

If you're new to tracking steps, start by tracking your average steps for a week or two. Then set a goal to push yourself above your average movement. The most important part of tracking your steps is to be mentally prepared for both the days when you don't reach your goal and the days when you exceed it. Trying to reach 10,000 steps can be a great goal to aim for, but if you are consistently getting discouraged, try re-accessing your goal. Overall, just get out and move more than you did yesterday.

When it comes to forms of active recovery, walking might not always be the first to come to mind as we tend to take the very act for granted - we often see it simply as a form of locomotion that gets us from point a to b. And because it's so easy we immediately discard it as a form of athletic recovery.



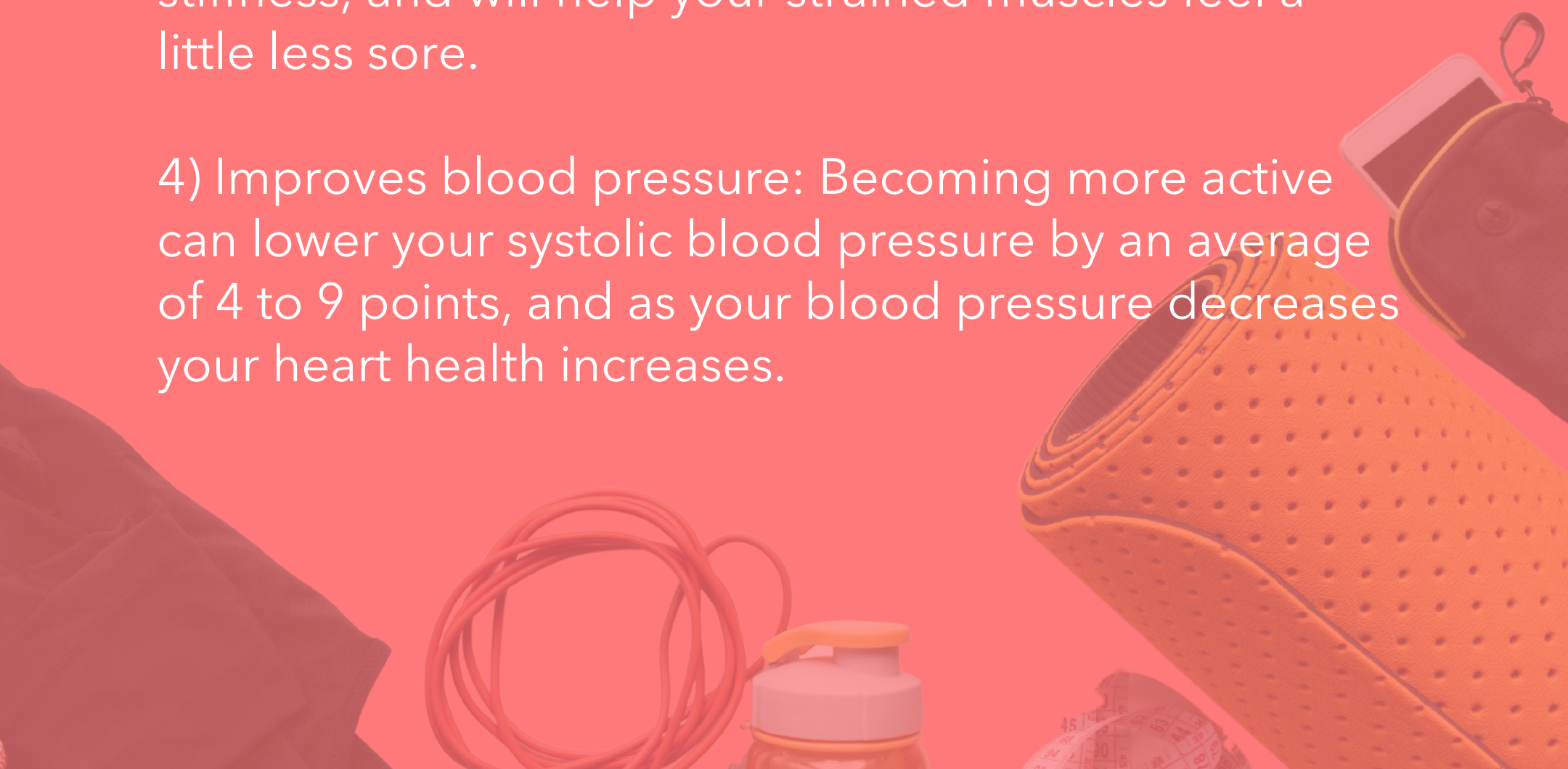
However, there are some great benefits to walking as a form of active recovery:

1) Clears waste and reduces inflammation: When you put one foot in front of the other you are initiating a blood exchange between the lower limbs and your heart, which promotes lymphatic drainage and clears out systemic waste in your legs and feet.

2) Tone up: Walking doesn't just boost your heart health; it also tones your whole body. Your legs and glutes get a good workout and if you pump your arms as you walk, they also benefit.

3) Helps you recover faster: This is the biggie. Walking increases your blood flow which helps reduce stiffness, and will help your strained muscles feel a little less sore.

4) Improves blood pressure: Becoming more active can lower your systolic blood pressure by an average of 4 to 9 points, and as your blood pressure decreases your heart health increases.

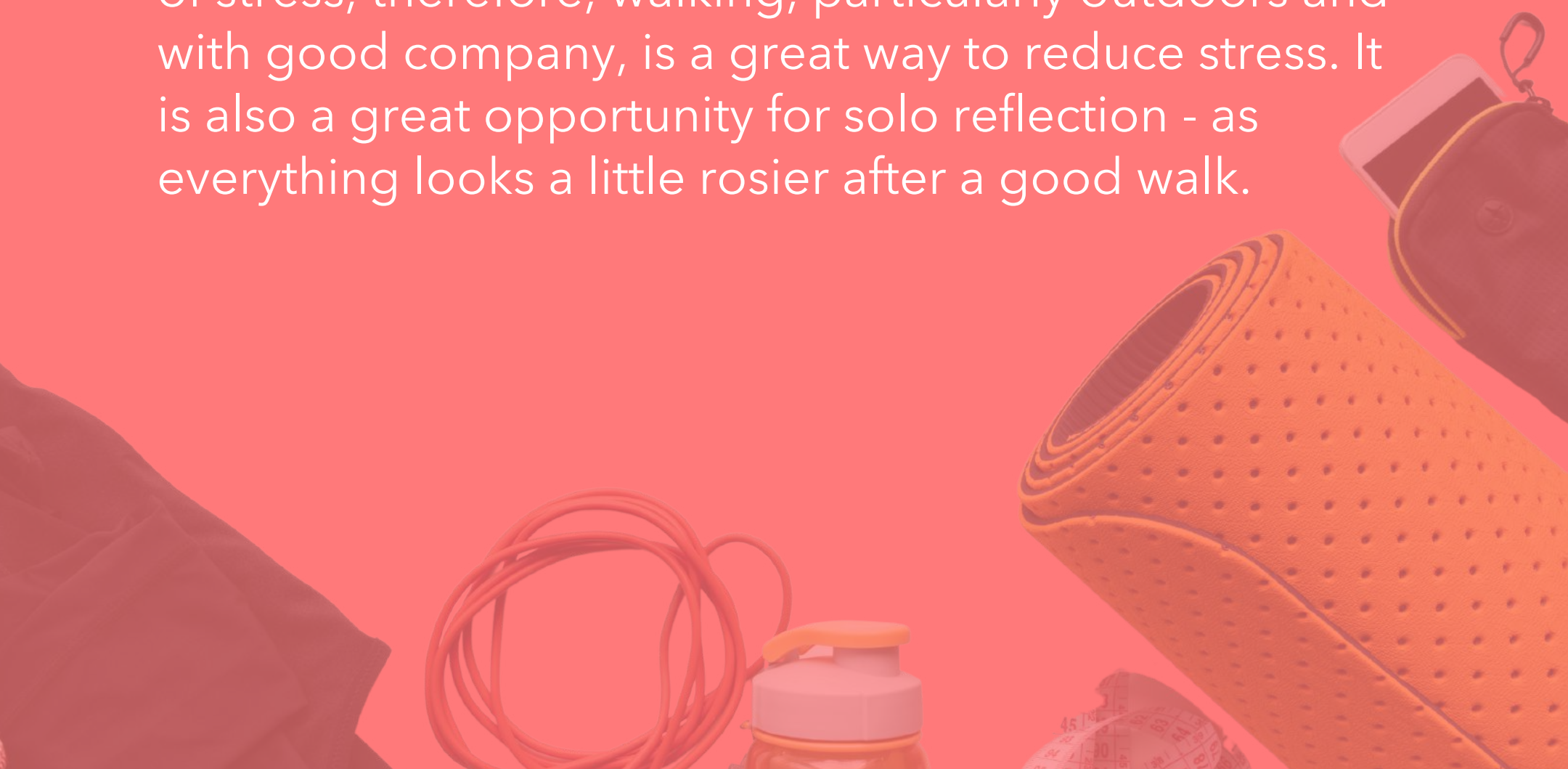


5) Stabilises blood glucose: Walking makes your muscles use more glucose, and over time this lowers your blood sugar levels - making you more sensitive to insulin.

6) Easiest way to build a bigger cup: As you become fitter your body can handle more intensive training - therefore the more you walk and the fitter you become more you will be able to push your body during your high-intensity training sessions.

7) No equipment needed: All you need to walk are your two feet. That's it. Get outside or even stay inside and walk it out.

8) Great for de-stressing: Vigorous exercise is a form of stress, therefore, walking, particularly outdoors and with good company, is a great way to reduce stress. It is also a great opportunity for solo reflection - as everything looks a little rosier after a good walk.



9) Helps curb those cravings: For a lot of athletes it's not the workout routine that is the most difficult element of staying healthy – it's keeping a grip on their nutrition, especially in the moments after a hard workout when their willpower is basically on fumes. As a result, they turn to supplements, food journaling, and meal prepping in order to stay on top of things in the kitchen. However, as powerful and proven as those things are, walking can further help the cause by easing those gnarly cravings we all experience. Researchers have found that even a 15-minute walk, done daily, can help to curb sweet intake by about 50%.

10) Your brain appreciates a good stroll: The benefits of walking for physical performance are one thing, but its ability to improve cognitive function is just as impressive.

- Walking can increase your memory strength and help you clear your mind.
- Walking can reduce anxiety sensitivity and even depression.
- Getting outdoors and walking has been shown to increase your self-esteem.

