

Alabama study: music is a dangerous pedestrian distraction

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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It's about that time of day when you are thinking about heading home from work. Part of your evening ritual is very likely exercise. Maybe you plan on going for a run, a run motivated by the perfect songs you have loaded into your iPod.

A carefree run fueled by your exercise playlist, however, can reportedly get dangerous very easily and lead to a [car accident](#). The director of the Youth Safety Laboratory from the University of Alabama led a study meant to measure the levels of danger that different distractions pose to pedestrians. Music was on the top of the list as the most dangerous distractions.

According to U.S. News and World Report, the study followed 125 college kids and watched them each cross the road while simultaneously engaging in the following different activities:

- Texting
- Talking on a cell phone
- Listening to music

The study found that talking on the phone while crossing the street is less dangerous than texting or listening to music. Those who cross the street while listening to music are reportedly about 33 percent more likely to be involved in a car accident compared to those who cross the street with no other distraction. Texting while crossing increased a pedestrian's risk by 25 percent.

The Alabama researcher behind the study is surprised by the findings. If true, the study suggests that the many walkers, runners and other pedestrians who listen to music while on the streets are putting themselves in danger of getting hurt in a car accident.

Also, if music is supposedly the most dangerous distraction, then why are there no limits on listening to music while driving? There are, after all, other laws related to distracted driving. The director behind the study believes the dangers of listening while walking and listening while driving are not the same. Pedestrians likely depend on their hearing more than is required of drivers when it comes to safety.

When you get home today and decide to go for a jog, keep this study in mind. It can be tempting to dump all thoughts and worries during a workout, but you should never forget about safety. And for those who are about to drive home, keep in mind that pedestrians are vulnerable and largely rely on driver safety in order for them to return home safely.

Source

U.S. News and World Report: "[Mobile Devices Dangerous for Pedestrians, Too](#)," Aug. 29, 2011