

Texters: Look both ways before crossing!

By ACSH Staff — December 14, 2012

Pedestrians who text are four times less likely to look before crossing the street, cross at designated areas or obey traffic lights, according to a [new study](#) [1].

Researchers from the University of Washington observed 1,102 people crossing busy streets at 20 intersections at three different, randomly chosen times. Their findings, published online in the journal *Injury Prevention*, revealed that nearly 30 percent of all pedestrians performed a distracting activity while crossing. Distractions included listening to music (11.2 percent), texting (7.3 percent), and using a handheld phone (6.2 percent).

While listening to music presents only the slight increased risk of screening out traffic noise, texting proved to be riskier. People texting took approximately two seconds longer to cross the street than those who weren't engaging in that behavior. With statistics from the U.S. showing that accidents involving pedestrians and cars injure more than 60,000 people a year, and kill more than 4,000, we might want to think twice before sending or responding to a text message while crossing an intersection.

Of course distracting activities increase one's risk, says ACSH's Dr. Gil Ross, but normal activities are full of risk. But since many of us, especially the younger group, have the twin problems of always being plugged in and believing that they're immortal, they and all of us should be made more aware of the real dangers of inattention.

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[1] http://vitals.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/12/12/15869982-texting-pedestrians-asking-for-trouble-study-finds