

## International Mountain Day



Mountains are some of the most beautiful of nature's structures, solid and regal as they stand against the sky, of such a size that they can catch entire countryside in their shadow, and turn back the ravages of storms against their unflinching sides. International Mountain Day has been created so that everyone can embrace the wonder and magic of the mountains around us. There are some truly spectacular mountains all around the world. You may have even had the pleasure of climbing one or several of them.

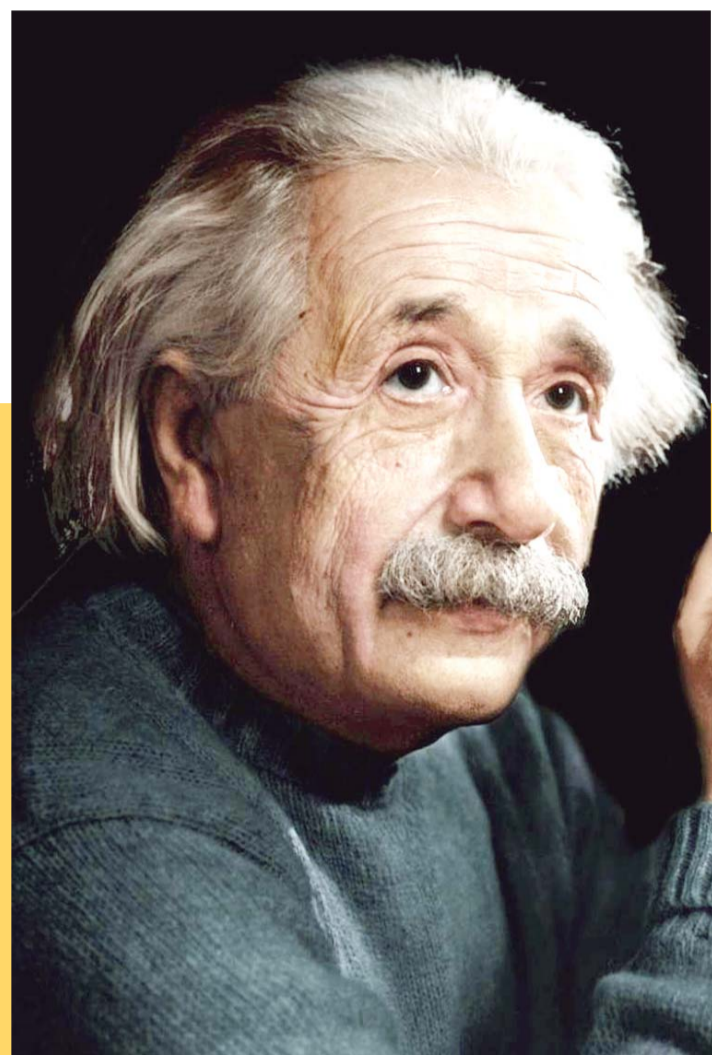
## #RESEARCH

# Sedentary Lifestyle and Sugary Diet

Vascular insulin resistance is a feature of obesity and type 2 diabetes that contributes to vascular disease.

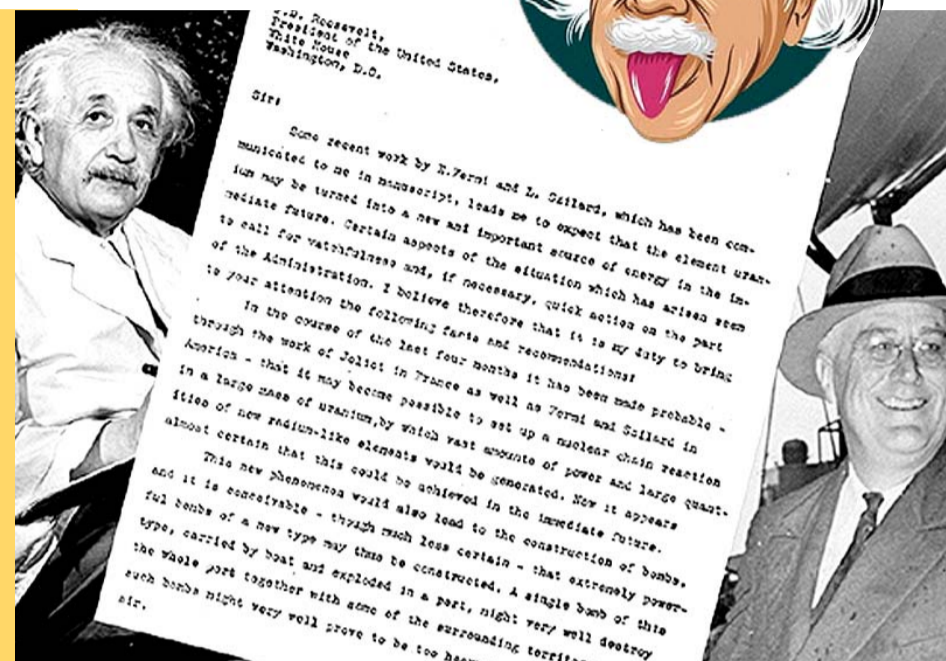


A new study offers the first evidence in humans that short-term lifestyle changes can disrupt the response to insulin of blood vessels. It's also the first study to show that men and women react differently to these changes. Vascular insulin resistance is a feature of obesity and type 2 diabetes that contributes to vascular disease. Researchers examined vascular insulin resistance in 36 young and healthy men and women by exposing them to 10 days of reduced physical activity, cutting their step count from 10,000 to 5,000 steps per day. The participants also increased their sugary beverage intake to six cans of soda per day. "We know that incidence of insulin resistance and cardiovascular disease is lower in premenopausal women compared to men, but we wanted to see how men and women reacted to reduced physical activity and increased sugar in their diet over a short period of time," says Camila Manrique-Acevedo, associate professor of Medicine at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. The results show that only in men did the sedentary lifestyle and high sugar intake cause decreased insulin, stimulated leg blood flow and a drop in a protein called adiponin, which regulates insulin sensitivity and is an important biomarker for cardiovascular disease. "These findings underscore a sex-related difference in the development of vascular insulin resistance, induced by adopting a lifestyle high in sugar and low on exercise," says Manrique-Acevedo. "To our knowledge, this is the first evidence in humans that vascular insulin resistance can be provoked by short-term adverse lifestyle changes, and it's the first documentation of sex-related differences in the development of vascular insulin resistance in association with changes in adiponin levels." Manrique-Acevedo says that she would next like to examine how long it takes to reverse these vascular and metabolic changes and more fully assess the impact of the role of gender in the development of vascular insulin resistance.



# The One Great Mistake in Einstein's Life

In the course of the last four months, it has been made probable, through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America, that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. Now, it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future.



Shailaza Singh  
Published Author,  
Poet and a YouTuber

On August 2nd, 1939, after consultation with fellow physicists Leo Szilard and Eugene Wigner, Albert Einstein signed the following letter to then-U.S. President, Franklin Roosevelt. The letter warned that the construction of an atomic bomb using uranium was indeed possible, advised the U.S. Government to invest time and money into its research, and then hinted that physicists in Nazi Germany had already begun similar work. As a result of the letter, Roosevelt created the Briggs Advisory Committee. This slowly evolved to become the Manhattan Project, an enormous project that later developed the Little Boy and Fat Man bombs. These were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, killing over 200,000 people.

Einstein later described signing the letter as the 'one great mistake in my life.'

Albert Einstein  
Old Grove Rd.  
Nassau Point  
Peconic, Long Island

August 2nd, 1939

FD. Roosevelt,  
President of the United States,  
White House  
Washington, D.C.



Einstein signed the letter written by physicist, Leo Szilard (right).

Sir: Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation, which has arisen, seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, for action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations.

In the course of the last four months, it has been made probable, through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America, that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. Now, it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future. This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable, though much less certain, that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well, destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory. However, such bombs might, very well, prove to be too heavy for transportation by air.

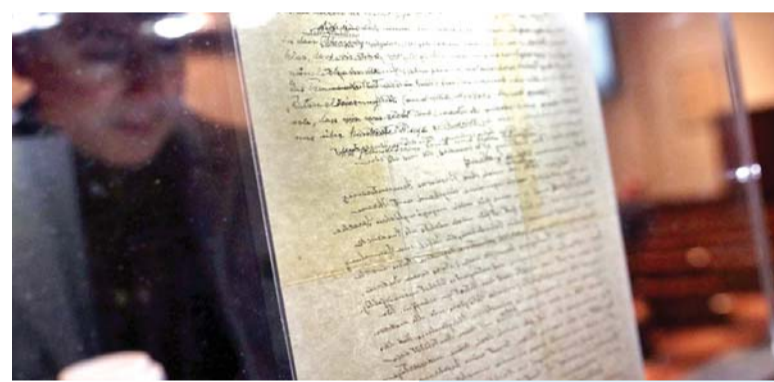
The United States has only very poor ores of uranium in moderate quantities. There is some good ore in Canada and the former Czechoslovakia, while the most important source of uranium is Belgian Congo.

In view of the situation, you may think it desirable to have some permanent contact maintained between the Administration and the group of physicists working on chain reactions in America. One possible way of achieving this might be for you to entrust with this task a person who has your confidence and who could perhaps serve in an unofficial capacity. His task might comprise the following:

- To approach Government Departments, keep them informed of the further development, and put forward recommendations for Government action, giving particular attention to the problem of securing a supply of uranium ore for the United States.
- To speed up the experimental work, which is at present being carried on within the limits of the budgets of university laboratories, by providing funds, if such funds be required, through his contacts with private persons who are willing to make contributions for this cause, and perhaps, also by obtaining the co-operation of industrial laboratories which have the necessary equipment.

I understand that Germany has actually stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines which she has taken over. That she should have taken such early action might perhaps be understood on the ground that the son of the German Under-Secretary of State, von Weizsäcker, is attached to the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium is now being repeated.

## #SPEAKING LETTERS



Einstein's letter doubting God.

In January of 1954, just a year before his death, Albert Einstein wrote the following letter to philosopher Erik Gutkind after reading his book, *Choose Life: The Biblical Call to Revolt*, and made known his views on religion. Apparently, Einstein had only read the book due to repeated recommendation by their mutual friend, Luitzen Egbertus Jan Brouwer. The letter was bought at auction in May 2008, for £170,000.

Princeton, 3. 1. 1954

Dear Mr. Gutkind,

Inspired by Brouwer's repeated suggestion, I read a great deal in your book, and thank you very much for lending it to me. What struck me was this, with regard to the factual attitude to life and to the human community, we have a great deal in common. Your personal ideal with its striving for freedom from ego-oriented desires, for making life beautiful and noble, with an emphasis on the purely human element. This unites us as having an "un-American attitude".

Still, without Brouwer's suggestion, I would never have gotten myself to engage intensively with your book because it is written in a language inaccessible to me. The word 'God' is for me nothing more than the expression and product of human weakness, the Bible a collection of honorable, but still purely primitive, legends,

Yours very truly,  
(Signed)  
Albert Einstein

which are nevertheless pretty childish. No interpretation, no matter how subtle, can change this for me. For me, the Jewish religion, like all other religions, is an incarnation of the most childish superstition. And the Jewish people, to whom I gladly belong, and whose thinking I have a deep affinity for, have no different quality for me than all other people. As far as my experience goes, they are also no better than other human groups, although, they are protected from the worst cancers by a lack of power. Otherwise, I cannot see anything 'chosen' about them.

In general, I find it painful that you claim a privileged position and try to defend it by two walls of pride, an external one as a man and an internal one as a Jew. As a man you claim, so to speak, a dispensation from causality otherwise accepted, as a Jew the privilege of monotheism. But a limited causality is no longer a causality at all, as our wonderful Spinoza recognized with all incision, probably as the first one. And the animistic interpretations of the religions of nature are in principle not annulled by monotheism. With such walls, we can only attain a certain self-deception, but our moral efforts are not furthered by them. On the contrary.

Now that I have quite openly stated our differences in intellectual convictions, it is still clear to me that we are quite close to each other in essential things, i.e., in our evaluations of human behaviour. What separates us are only intellectual 'props' and 'rationalizations' in Freud's language. Therefore, I think that we would understand each other quite well if we talked about concrete things.

With friendly thanks and best wishes,

Yours,  
A. Einstein

## #SPEAKING LETTERS



There seems to be no record of Nazi Germany even trying to make an atom bomb.

On April 9th, 1948, a month before Israel declared independence, just over one hundred residents of Deir Yassin were massacred by members of two militant Zionist groups, Lehi and Irgun, as part of an effort to cleanse the area of its Arab population. The next day, Albert Einstein wrote the following passionate letter to Shepard Rifkin, a New York-based representative of Lehi, who had recently written to Einstein in the hope of garnering some high-profile support for the group's efforts. His belief that Einstein, a man who publicly backed the creation of a Jewish homeland in the British Mandate of Palestine, but by different means, would agree to that such a suggestion was clearly misplaced.

April 10, 1948

Mr. Shepard Rifkin  
Exec. Director  
American Friends of the Fighters  
for the Freedom of Israel  
149 Second Ave.  
New York 3.N.Y.

Dear Sir:

When a real and final catastrophe should befall us in Palestine, the first and the second responsible for it, the 'Terrorist' organizations build up from our own ranks. I am not willing to see anybody associated with those misled and criminal people.

Sincerely yours,  
(Signed, 'A. Einstein')  
Albert Einstein

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



Albert Einstein.

## #INSIGHT

# Working Class Life in Ancient Rome

While powerful figures tend to take up the most space in our history books, the vast majority of people in the ancient world were regular working class folks, and most people's lives revolved around the daily grind.

A new book sheds light on working life in the Roman Empire, offering insights into a complex society that spanned three continents and incorporated dozens (if not hundreds) of cultures.

While powerful figures tend to take up the most space in our history books, the vast majority of people in the ancient world were regular working class folks, and most people's lives revolved around the daily grind.

Jordan Rogers, an assistant professor of History at North Carolina State University, and Del Maticic, a fellow in Greek and Roman Studies at Vassar, are the co-editors of the book *Working Lives in Ancient Rome* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024).

Here, Rogers and Maticic dig into what has (and hasn't) changed for the working class since the time of ancient Rome.

Q. What drew you and your co-editor to push forward with a book on working life in ancient Rome? What's your fascination with the subject?

A. Jordan Rogers: As the original idea came about as we grappled with the vagaries of the academic job market. We were still in our respective graduate programs when we were first having these discussions. What would our jobs be? How did we define those jobs? Would there be jobs for us when all was said and done? If we didn't get the academic job, would our identities as academics and intellectuals be compromised? The fascination, I suppose, is that we keep making a distinction between these two spheres of existence, work and life, which, of course, changes over time and between cultures. But we still feel compelled to do so. Why? And what does that say about culture more generally? About the worldview of people? About what's important? These are questions that not many people have asked, or at least not in these specific formulations, about the Roman world. So, we thought it would be useful.

Q. Many writings and artifacts survive from the time of the Roman Empire. What sort of new technologies, tools, or techniques are helping us garner additional insights from these objects? Or are there new philosophical approaches that are helping us, such as paying attention to aspects of Roman society, that earlier historians overlooked?

A. Maticic: The primary ancient technologies, that we present in our book, are concepts. The Latin word *labor*, for instance, referred to 'work' and 'toil,' and also to a wide range of figurative actions and processes taken by humans of different strata, from elites to enslaved peoples, as well as nonhuman living things. The labor of plants, for instance, is to grow. We think that concepts like this are useful in the context of late-stage capitalism, in which work and labor become such important buzzwords for thinking about the role of work in the world.

Rogers: To add to Del's point about 'concepts,' especially of work, one of the things we endeavour to do in this volume is to illuminate the many perspectives regarding what work meant in ancient Rome (and, as a result, what it could mean now). These perspectives are often contradictory, but they do cohere.

Q. At its height, the Roman Empire was incredibly vast, it stretched from Morocco to Iran, from the UK to Egypt. Were there commonalities across the empire? In other words, did Roman culture affect the working lives of everyday people?

A. Rogers: There were, of course, commonalities, most notably imposed by the Roman legal system. So, for example, making work contracts, according to Roman legal standards, would look the same across the empire. Still, the reality is that the Roman Empire was a multicultural one, where regional differences can be observed. Some of our papers explore these regional differences in some detail, especially with regards to, for instance, the networks of skilled professionals like teachers, doctors, or architects, who moved about the Roman world, and typically in more circumscribed areas.

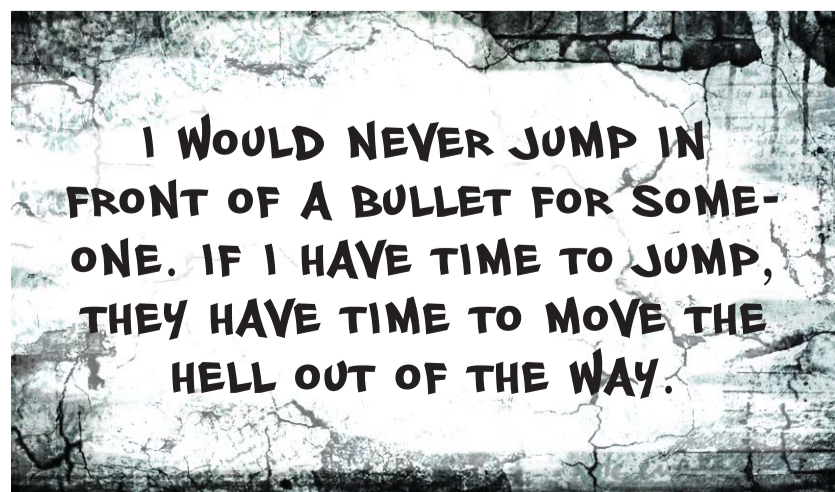
Q. Many things have changed over the intervening centuries, from cell phones to airplanes. What hasn't changed? What would ancient workers recognize in their modern peers?

A. Rogers: Just like now, there were many different responses to work. Some Romans considered any work to be a form of slavery to another (consider, e.g., the modern notion of the corporate 'wage-slave'). Others saw their occupation as the most important part of their identity and therefore placed great social value on the work they did. Still others considered work to be the natural state of things, imposed by divine will, while others, especially the enslaved, would actively design ways to avoid the work forced upon them. So, in that sense, not much has changed as far as the variety of stances that can be occupied vis-à-vis labor, and usually, these are defined by an individual's proximity to power in their world of work, then as now.

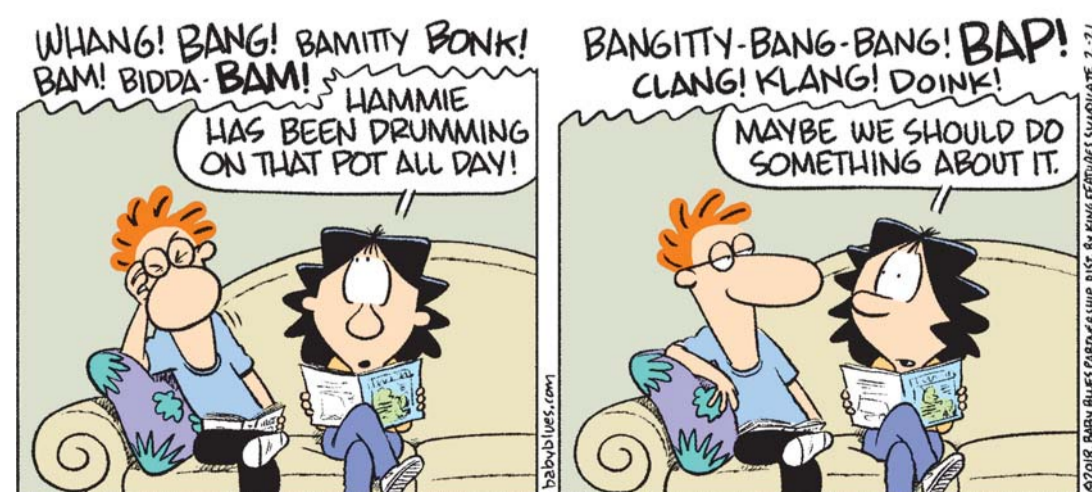
Maticic: I've sometimes heard it says that the cultural obsession with work in the modern world is a phenomenon associated with the capitalist present. But even in the ancient world, people's work was so important to their understanding of themselves that their professional identity was frequently mentioned on their tombstones.



## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman