

Walking *for* **exercise**



Starting a fitness and exercise program is one of the best things you can do to improve the quality of your life and well being. According to the World Health Organization, physical inactivity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (6% of deaths globally). This follows high blood pressure (13%), tobacco use (9%) and high blood glucose (6%).

Worried about heart disease? Hoping to prevent osteoporosis? Physical activity might be the ticket. Regular physical activity can help you prevent—or manage—high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. And there's more! Regular physical activity can help you prevent type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis. Regular exercise helps you lose weight and /or maintain your optimal body weight. When you engage in physical activity, you burn calories and therefore control your weight. The higher the intensity and duration of your workout, the more calories you burn.

Exercise is also proven to decrease stress. Certain chemicals are stimulated during physical activities that leave you feeling happier and calmer than you did before you started. You will also look and feel better when you exercise! Physical activity delivers oxygen and nutrients to your tissues. In fact, regular physical activity helps your entire cardiovascular system—the circulation of blood through your heart and blood vessels—work more efficiently. When your heart and lungs work more efficiently, you'll have more energy to do the things you enjoy.

Why walk?

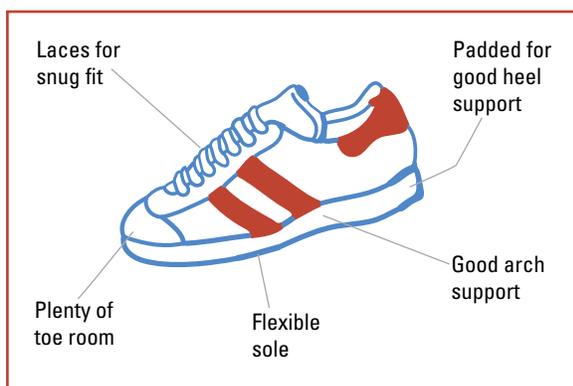
Walking is a gentle and natural form of exercise that can ease you into a higher level of fitness and health. It's safe, simple, doesn't require practice, and the health benefits

are many. Walking for exercise can be done anywhere, without the need of a gym or expensive equipment. It is easy to get started and find time to incorporate into your daily routine. Walking is also an activity you can continue to do even while on travel, and away from home. Walk with your family members, friends, and colleagues.

Preparing for your walking program

1. Assess your fitness level and medical conditions. Get medical clearance from your physician if:
 - You have been sedentary for a year or more.
 - You have been diagnosed with heart trouble.
 - Pregnant.
 - High blood pressure.
 - Diabetes.
 - You have chest pain, especially when exerting yourself.
 - You often feel faint or have severe dizzy spells.
 - Other medical conditions.
2. Clothing
 - Your clothing should be weather appropriate. The more comfortable you are, the better you will enjoy your time walking. Your walking clothing should be comfortable and loose-fitting to allow you to move freely. Depending on your climate, dress in layers so you may remove a layer as you warm up while walking, and put it back on if you feel cool.
 - A hat is essential to preventing sun exposure on hot and sunny days, or keeping you from losing heat in cold weather.





3. Shoes

- **Fit:** Your shoes must fit well, but leave enough room so your feet can expand while walking. Your walking shoes should be a size to a size and a half larger than your dress shoe.
 - **Flex:** Good walking shoes are flexible, as your foot rolls through each step. See if your shoe bends in the ball of the foot and if you can twist it from side to side. If it is stiff and uncomfortable, you need different shoes.
 - **Flat:** Walking shoes should be flat, with little difference in height between the heel and the ball of the foot.
 - **Check the support of your walking shoes every 3 to 6 months.** If you find that it has deteriorated, it is time for new ones.
4. Wear Sunscreen to protect your skin.
 5. Carry keys and other articles in pockets. Pack lightly for most walks and leave your bag or briefcase at home.
 6. Carry a bottle of water if you plan to walk for 15 minutes or more
 7. Carry a cell phone in your pocket in case of emergency or accident.
 8. Drink enough water! Remember to drink lots of water before; during and after your walk (don't wait until you feel thirsty or start sweating)
 9. Pre walk warm-up, stretching, and cool down.

- **Warm-up first!** Never stretch cold muscles. Spend about 5 minutes walking slowly to warm up your muscles. You can walk in place if you want. Increase your pace until you feel warm.
- **Stretch.** After warming up; stretch your muscles before walking. (See the stretching guide included.)
- **Cool down after each walking session** To reduce stress on your heart and muscles, end each walking session by walking slowly for about five minutes. Then, repeat your stretches.



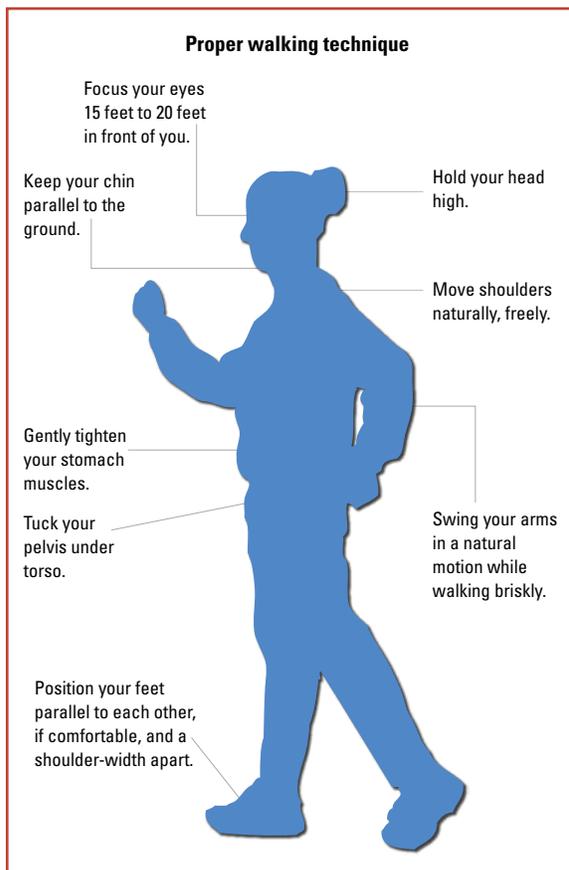
Proper walking technique

It is important to know how to walk properly to avoid injury and engage the correct muscles. Exercise and posture go hand-in-hand when it comes to getting the most out of your walks. Let's start with your head and work down to your feet.

- Keep your eyes focused forward, not up or down.
- Chin should be pointed down and pulled in slightly to maintain a neutral neck position, which will prevent neck pain by properly supporting your head.
- **Relax!** Keep your shoulders back and down and relaxed. This will cause

your arms to swing naturally. Do not squeeze your hands into fists, keep them relaxed. You can bend your arms at a 90 degree angle or leave them at your sides, whichever is more comfortable.

- Your chest should be slightly lifted. Imagine that a string is attached to it and is gently pulling your chest up and out.
- Keep your belly button gently sucked in toward your spine. This will keep your abdominal muscles activated, and helps to protect your lower back from injury.
- Use the heel-toe method. Your heel should strike the ground, then the ball of your foot, and finally your toes.
- **Walk with the stride that feels natural!** Do not take extra long strides to increase your speed. This will only increase your chances of injury. To walk faster, simply take more steps.



You can see how important proper posture is to engage the right muscles and to protect your neck and back. Proper posture will also help you strengthen muscles, such as your tummy, legs, and buttocks to shape and trim your body.

Using Pedometers for walking – Keeping track of your progress

A pedometer is a device that senses your body motion and counts your footsteps. Inside each unit, is a motion sensitive device, which is triggered every time you take a step. It is usually worn clipped on your belt.



The numbers of steps that are taken are logged and visible on the pedometer, letting you know how many steps you have taken. To get the best results keep the pedometer as horizontal as possible. This is because pedometers need to be parallel to the ground to work correctly. If it is tilted at all, the reading will not be accurate.

So why use a pedometer?

Pedometers can be useful guides when attempting to increase your fitness level. You can track daily, how many steps you have taken during your walking program and your general daily activities. Gradually build up to 10,000 steps a day or more by adding another 200–500 steps each week.

One kilometer is approximately 1320 steps. A mile is approximately 2000 steps. To get you started, some samples of walking programs are included in this brochure. As you progress, you may develop your own!

Write down your daily progress by keeping a log. This will help you to stay motivated, focused, and proud of your progress and efforts.

How Do I Get Started?

Beginner walkers who haven't been physically active in awhile should start out by walking 10–15 minutes at a time. It is important to start slow to prevent injuries to muscles and joints.

Don't rush yourself! If you feel out of breath and tired after 15 minutes of walking, stop and congratulate yourself on getting that far.

Increase your duration before you increase the intensity. This means that if you aren't physically able to walk for 30 minutes a day, take your time to work up to walking 30 minutes a day and then you can work on increasing your walking speed.

Here are a few more fitness walking tips:

1. Do not increase the number of minutes you walk each week too quickly. Follow the 10 percent rule. Do not increase your walking time by more than 10 percent from week to week.
2. Use the "talk test". If you cannot manage to say a single sentence because you are breathing so heavily, you are walking too hard. If you are able to sing, you aren't walking hard enough.
3. Consider the "hard-easy" rule. One workout should be hard for you, meaning that you walk longer or faster than what is comfortable for you. The next workout should be a walk that is comfortable. This will allow your muscles time to recuperate. Beginner walkers should rest the day after a hard workout, which would be the "easy" part of the rule.

Trails and paths and safety while walking

- Make sure you are comfortable in your surroundings and choose the best time of day.
- Find a path or trail you enjoy.
- Make your walk pleasurable by taking a scenic route or neighborhood you enjoy.
- Start with an easy path and slowly progress
- If you are a beginner start with a flat surface, as you progress you may want to challenge yourself by walking up a hill.

Note

Individuals beginning a walk program within their country office location should do so pending security advice on safety, such as the best time to walk, specific locations to avoid, and any other recommendation specific to their location.

Look for alternative secure and safe areas and places to walk such as sports fields and exercise clubs.



FAQs

I have no time to walk. What can I do?

If you can't walk for 30 minutes at one time, take 5-, 10-, or 15-minute walks throughout the day. It all adds up to better health.

Make it a habit to take the stairs instead of escalators or elevators.

I do not feel motivated to walk.

Ask colleagues, friends, and family members to join you.

Start or join a walking club. See brochure and guide on how to start a walking group

Make walking part of your daily routine by walking to work, marketplace, or any other close destination.

Take the time to walk to a colleague's office instead to using the phone or email.

The possibilities are endless!

How fast should I walk?

A good pace for fitness walking is 3.5 to 4.0 miles or 5.6 to 6.4 km per hour. But build up to it gradually!

How many times a week should I walk?

You can do walking exercise every day. If that is not possible, you should aim to walk at least 3 times a week and increase gradually to 5 and 6 times a week.

References

<http://cdc.gov/Workplace/>

<http://www.thewalkingsite.com>

<http://walking.about.com>

<http://www.americanheart.org/>

<http://getwalking.org.uk>

Walking program example 1

Week	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	15 min	15 min	20 min	15 min	20 min	15 min	20 min
2	15 min	20 min	20 min	15 min	20 min	15 min	25 min
3	15 min	25 min	20 min	15 min	25 min	20 min	25 min
4	20 min	30 min	20 min	20 min	25 min	20 min	30 min
5	20 min	30 min	30 min	20 min	30 min	20 min	35 min
6	25 min	30 min	30 min	25 min	30 min	25 min	40 min
7	25 min	30 min	40 min	30 min	30 min	30 min	40 min
8	25 min	30 min	40 min	30 min	40 min	30 min	50 min
9	30 min	40 min	40 min	30 min	40 min	40 min	50 min
10	30 min	40 min	50 min	30 min	50 min	40 min	50 min
11	40 min	40 min	50 min	40 min	50 min	40 min	50 min
12	40 min	40 min	60 min	40 min	60 min	40 min	60 min

Adapted from "About.com.walking"



Walking program example 2

A sample daily walking program			
This program is only a guide. Your fitness walking sessions may be longer or shorter based on your ability and the advice of your health care provider.			
Warm up time		Cooldown time	
Walk slowly & stretch	Brisk walk time	Walk slowly & stretch	Total time
Weeks 1–2			
5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	15 minutes
Weeks 3–4			
5 minutes	10 minutes	5 minutes	20 minutes
Weeks 5–6			
5 minutes	15 minutes	5 minutes	25 minutes
Weeks 7–8			
5 minutes	20 minutes	5 minutes	30 minutes
Weeks 9–10			
5 minutes	25 minutes	5 minutes	35 minutes
Weeks 11–12			
5 minutes	30 minutes	5 minutes	40 minutes
Weeks 13–14			
5 minutes	35 minutes	5 minutes	45 minutes
Weeks 15–16			
5 minutes	40 minutes	5 minutes	50 minutes
Weeks 17–18			
5 minutes	45 minutes	5 minutes	55 minutes
Weeks 19–20			
5 minutes	50 minutes	5 minutes	60 minutes

Try to walk daily. If you are walking fewer than three times per week, give yourself more than two weeks before increasing the pace and frequency

Adapted from the National Institute of Diabetes, digestive and kidney disorders
<http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/walking.htm#howstart>



