



## Track Your Steps

A pedometer is a small, inexpensive device that attaches to your waistband and records how many steps you take. Some models also record distance and time. Set "step goals" for the week and keep track of your progress. **Suggestion:** Wear your pedometer all day to find out how many steps you take without even trying.

## BUDDY UP

Good conversation can make the steps fly by. Try starting a walking club. **Here's how:**

- **Recruit.** Ask friends, family or co-workers, or post fliers around town.
- **Meet.** Hold your first meeting at a neutral location, such as a coffee shop, mall or library. Set goals for the group and determine interest.
- **Plan.** Decide how often the group will walk together, the route, meeting place and time, and how long you will walk.
- **Organize.** If your group stays together, you might consider having T-shirts made, creating a newsletter or entering charity walks together.

There's safety, motivation and fun in numbers. View walking as a social occasion as well as an exercise session and your destination will be success.

## Did You Know?

According to the American Heart Association, a program that includes fast walking can significantly help stroke sufferers recover cardiovascular fitness, muscle coordination and strength, posture, balance and range of motion.

**Note:** If you've had a stroke, talk to your health care provider before you start exercising.

## Stepping Out Safely

**Take natural steps, not giant strides.** Taking big steps can stress your calf muscles and overextend your knees.

### Lace up properly.

Wear properly fitted shoes to prevent blisters and shin, knee and heel pain.

### Drink plenty of fluids.

This is especially important on hot days when your body can lose up to a quart of fluid per hour.

### Be in the know.

Walk in familiar, well-populated areas and make sure someone knows your route.

**Open your ears.** Your safest bet is to leave the earphones at home. If you do wear them, lower the volume so you can hear sounds around you.

**Stay on the sidewalk.** If no sidewalk is available, walk against oncoming traffic so you can see vehicles approaching.

**Stay in sight.** If you walk at twilight or after dark, wear reflective materials. At any time, wear light-colored clothing that is easy to see.

**Keep in touch.** Bring a cell phone or change for a phone call in case of an emergency.

**Carry identification.** Put your name, address, phone number and emergency contact information (such as a friend, family member or neighbor) in your shoe or tie it to your shoelace.

**Final thought:** You don't need a lot of preparation, fancy equipment or know-how to start a walking program that works. Simply take a few more steps each day, and walk your way to better fitness and health.



# WALKING FOR BETTER HEALTH

ONE STEP AT A TIME



## WHY WALK?

You do it every day, and chances are you rarely think twice about it. Walking, the way you move from point A to point B, could also bring you these health benefits:

- Reduce your risk of heart disease.
- Lower high blood pressure, or keep normal blood pressure on track.
- Reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes, or manage the condition if you already have it.
- Help you maintain a healthy weight, or lose weight if you need to.
- Manage stress and help you feel more positive.
- Sleep better.

What are you waiting for? Lace up your walking shoes and head out the door for the easiest of workouts. This brochure can help you start and stick with a walking program.



## Start Off on the Right Foot

How you begin your walking program can set the stage for a lifetime of healthy activity.

If you are unaccustomed to exercise, first check with your health care provider to be sure walking is safe for you. Then, design a program you can stick with.

## About Stretching

Stretched muscles are less prone to strain and injury. Stretch for at least 5 minutes near the start of your walk, after warming up by walking slowly for 5 minutes. **Smart moves:** Circle your ankles, point and flex your toes, reach your arms over your head and gently hold leg stretches for about 30 seconds. Stretch again at the end of your walk. Remember to stretch gently without straining and do not bounce.

## READY TO WALK?

- STEP 1 Start Slowly**  
Don't expect too much right away. Start out by walking at a moderate pace for just 20 minutes.  
**Goal:** Walk most days of the week.
- STEP 2 Try a 3-Part Walk**  
Walk slowly for 5 minutes; increase your speed for 10 minutes; then end with 5 more minutes of slower walking.
- STEP 3 Get Motivated**  
Set goals. Track your program in a walking journal. Record how far you walked, how long and how many times per week. Include health benefits you've experienced since you started walking — such as improved sleep, less stress or weight loss.
- STEP 4 Stay Steady**  
Treat your walking workouts like an important appointment you can't miss. Increase your speed and time walked gradually. Add 2-3 minutes per week to the faster portion of your walk.



**GOAL:** Increase your walk time to at least 30 minutes per day most days.

- STEP 5 Dress Right**  
Wear layered clothing that is appropriate for the season. Wear a hat in cold weather and put on sunscreen before you head out, no matter what the season. Look for synthetic fabrics that remove sweat from the skin and help it evaporate.

- STEP 6 Beat Boredom**  
Vary your route, add a few hills or challenge yourself by increasing your speed. Walk with a friend or take the dog.  
**Tip:** Alternating days outdoors with walking on a treadmill or at the mall can help you stick with your program.

## Walking Off Weight

Aiming to lose 1-2 pounds per week is a sensible plan for long-term weight loss. To lose 1 pound, you will need to burn 3,500 calories more than you take in over the course of a week. **Try this:** Cut about 200-250 calories from what you eat each day (sodas, snacks or high-calorie fast foods, for example) and also take a brisk walk. You can eliminate 500 calories per day this way — for seven days that would amount to 1 pound lost per week.

For a person weighing approximately 150 pounds

| WALKING 3.5 MPH | CALORIES BURNED   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Half hour       | Approximately 140 |
| 1 hour          | Approximately 280 |

| WALKING 4.5 MPH | CALORIES BURNED   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Half hour       | Approximately 230 |
| 1 hour          | Approximately 460 |

## BOOST YOUR WALKING WORKOUT

Look for walking opportunities.

Take the stairs at work, walk the escalator and park farther from the door.

Take shorter, quicker steps.

**Pump** your arms, with elbows close to your sides.

Consider light hand weights (starting with 1-pound weights). **Note:** Consult your

health care provider before adding weights if you have high blood pressure or heart disease.

**Alternate** brisk walking with slower walking.

Change the **scenery**. Walking on soft surfaces such as grass or gravel burns more calories than walking on pavement.

Burn more **calories** by walking uphill. But take it slowly and carefully on the downside to go easy on your knees.

