

Have a Routine

When you start your walking routine, remember to:

- ✓ **Get the right gear.** Choose shoes with proper arch support, a firm heel, and thick flexible soles to cushion your feet and absorb shock.
- ✓ **Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes and gear that is suitable for all types of weather.** If you are walking outdoors when it is dark, wear bright colors or reflective tape for visibility. Wear sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses if you are going out during the day.
- ✓ **You may find it beneficial to use an activity tracker, app, or pedometer.** These can be helpful to track your time, distance, heart rate and calories.
- ✓ **Walk slowly for the first 5-10 minutes** to warm up your muscles and prepare your body for exercise.
- ✓ **At the end of your walk,** walk slowly for 5-10 minutes to help your muscles cool down.
- ✓ **After you have cooled down,** gently stretch your muscles. You can also stretch before you walk, remember to warm up first.



Track your progress

Tracking how many steps you take, the distance you walk and how long it takes can help you see where you started from and can be motivation to keep it up. Seeing how much you have progressed as far as the miles you have walked each week, month and year can help you push through the days you want to skip your walk. This can be tracked through an activity tracker, app, or pedometer or you can record these numbers in a walking journal.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, November 1). Health benefits of physical activity for adults. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved September 2, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/health-benefits-of-physical-activity-for-adults.html>

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. (2021, May 19). Walk your way to fitness. Mayo Clinic. Retrieved September 2, 2022, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/walking/art-20046261#:~:text=Know%20the%20benefits&text=Maintain%20a%20healthy%20weight%20and,Strengthen%20your%20bones%20and%20muscles>

This brochure is intended to promote healthy habits. It is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or professional care. Before making changes to your diet or exercise, consult your health care provider.

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WALKING

» Improve Your Health



Let's Walk
Our Way to Fitness!

The Benefits

Being physically active can **improve your brain health, assist in managing your weight, reduce the risk of disease, strengthen bones and muscles, and improve your ability to do everyday activities.**

Physical activity does not need to be difficult. Taking a daily refreshing walk can help you live a healthier life.

Regular walking can help you:



Improve Circulation

Walking helps prevent heart disease, brings up the heart rate, lowers blood pressure and strengthens the heart. Post-menopausal women who walk just 1-2 miles a day can lower their blood pressure by nearly 11 points in 24 weeks.



Enjoy a Longer Life

Research finds that people who exercise regularly in their 50s and 60s are 35% less likely to die over the next eight years than their non-walking counterparts. That number shoots up to 45% less likely for those who have underlying health conditions.



Lose Weight

A brisk 30-minute walk burns 200 calories. Over time, these calories can turn into pounds lost.



Improve Sleep

Studies found that women, ages 50 to 75, who took an hour morning walk, were more likely to relieve insomnia than women who did not.



Improve Your Breath

When walking, your breathing rate increases, causing oxygen to travel faster through your bloodstream, helping to remove waste products and improve your energy level and the ability to heal.



Strengthen Muscles

Walking not only tones your leg and abdominal muscles, but you can tone up your arm muscles by pumping them as you walk. This increases your range of motion, shifting the pressure and weight from your joints to your muscles.



Support Your Joints

Most of the joint cartilage has no direct blood supply and gets its nutrition from joint fluid that circulates as we move. Movement and compression from walking brings oxygen and nutrients into the area.



Lighten Your Mood

Walking releases natural endorphins to the body. This is one of the emotional benefits of exercise. Endorphins are produced to help relieve pain, reduce stress, and improve mood.

The more you walk on a consistent basis and build up your speed and frequency, the better the benefits can be.

For example, when starting you may be considered an average walker, and then work your way up to walking faster and walking a mile in a shorter amount of time. This can be a good way to get aerobic activity, improve your heart health and increase your endurance while burning calories.

You can also alternate periods of speed walking with a slower pace walk. This has several benefits, including improving cardiovascular fitness and burning more calories than regular walking.



What is your Technique?

Turning your normal walk into a fitness stride requires good posture and purposeful movements. Preferably, you should look like this when you are walking:

- ☑ Your head is up. You are looking forward and not at the ground.
- ☑ Your neck, shoulders and back are relaxed.
- ☑ You are swinging your arms with a minor bend in your elbows.
- ☑ Your stomach muscles are slightly tightened, and your back is straight.
- ☑ You are walking smoothly, rolling your foot from heel to toe

Health Benefits of Physical Activity for Adults



IMMEDIATE

A single bout of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity provides immediate benefits for your health.

LONG-TERM

Regular physical activity provides important health benefits for chronic disease prevention.



Sleep

Improves sleep quality



Brain Health

Reduces risks of developing dementia (including Alzheimer's disease) and reduces risk of depression



Heart Health

Lowers risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes



Cancer Prevention

Lowers risk of eight cancers: bladder, breast, colon, endometrium, esophagus, kidney, lung, and stomach



Healthy Weight

Reduces risk of weight gain



Bone Strength

Improves bone health



Balance and Coordination

Reduces risks of falls



Emerging research suggests physical activity may also help boost immune function.
Nierman, "The Compelling Link," 201-217.
Jones, "Exercise, Immunity, and Illness," 317-344.



Source: Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition

To learn more, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/health-benefits-of-physical-activity-for-adults.html>

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