



BEGINNING A WALKING PROGRAM



You know you want to begin a fitness program, but don't know where to start. It's easy!! Walking is one of the easiest and most profitable forms of exercise. All you need is a good pair of shoes, comfortable clothing and a desire to start.

Here's an easy to follow beginner schedule that starts with 15 minute walks and will have you walking 60 minutes at a time in 12 weeks. Warm up and cool down time are included in the scheduled minutes. Be sure to stretch after your walks.

WEEK	SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
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.

Consistency is key in creating a new habit, so be sure that you get something in at least 5 days a week. The starting day for this schedule may be changed to suit your needs. Just try to keep your easy and harder days in the same order. If you are particularly tired one week, don't increase your time.....just stick with the last week's schedule.

It's ok to take a day off once a week – choose one of the lighter days (Sun. or Wed.) for this.

It's natural to feel a little tired or have a few muscle aches when beginning a fitness program. Do not let this keep you from walking. ON the other hand, if you are in pain it may be prudent to take a day of rest. If the pain continues, see your doctor.



Once you can walk easily for 30-60 minutes, 5 to 6 days a week, you may want to put more "umph" or speed into your routine.

If you have any health concerns, be sure to check with your doctor

before beginning any exercise routine.

TIPS FOR WALKING



1. Incorporate a warm-up, cool down and stretches in your routine. Start you walk at a slow warm up pace, stop and do a few warm up stretches. Then walk for the desired length of time. End your walk with the slower cool down pace and stretch well. Stretching will make you feel great and assist in injury prevention.
2. Use good posture. Walk tall, look forward (not at the ground) gazing about 20 feet ahead. Your chin should be level and your head up.
3. Keep your chest raised, and shoulders relaxed (shoulders down, back and relaxed).
4. Bend your arms in slightly less than a 90 degree angle. Cup your hands gently. Swing arms front to back (not side to side – arms should not cross your body). Do not swing elbows higher than your sternum (breast bone). Swing your arms faster and your feet will follow.
5. Tighten your abs and buttocks and fall into a natural stride. Flatten your back and tilt your pelvis slightly forward.
6. Pretend you are walking along a straight line. Resist the urge to elongate your steps. To go faster, take smaller, faster steps.
7. Push off with your toes. Concentrate on landing on your heel, rolling through the step and pushing off with your toes. Use the natural spring of your calf muscles to propel you forward.
8. Breathe naturally. As you walk, take deep rhythmic breaths to get the maximum amount of oxygen through your system. Walk fast enough that your breathing is increased yet you are not out of breath.
9. Be sure to drink plenty of water before, during, and after walking.

WALKING DON'TS

Common mistakes made by walkers.....

1. Do not over stride
2. Do not use too vigorous arm movements
3. Do not look at the ground
4. Do not hunch your shoulders



5. Do not carry hand weights or place weights on your ankles.