

# Start Walking



## Walk your way to better health!

To improve health and reduce the risk of chronic disease, healthy adults should take part in moderate physical activity, such as walking, for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, or participating in vigorous physical activity, such as power walking, for at least 20 minutes, 3 days a week. *[American Heart Association]*

## Further benefits of walking

- **Reducing your risk** of heart disease
- **Improving and better managing** your blood pressure and cholesterol
- **Strengthening and toning** your muscles
- **Increasing bone strength** and helping to prevent osteoporosis
- **Boosting your** immune system
- **Burning calories** to maintain a healthy weight
- **Managing your stress**, clearing your mind and boosting your spirits!

## Walking is one of the easiest fitness activities to start

1. **Plan your route.** Walk a neighborhood loop, a local bike path, or your favorite park or town center
2. **Schedule your walking** for the week and write it on your calendar
3. **Lace up your shoes and GO!**

## Get Started Now!

- **If a 30-minute walk is too much to start with**, break it into three 10-minute walks, or two 15-minute walking sessions.
- **For motivation and accountability**, walk with a coworker over your lunch break or with a friend or family member after work.
- **Park your car 10 minutes from your work building** or get off public transportation a few stops early and walk the rest of the way home.
- **Don't let the weather or allergies slow you down!** Walk indoors, on a treadmill, or at the local mall.
- **Try using a pedometer** to track your steps and see your progress.

**\* Check with your doctor before starting any exercise regimen!**



**Need ideas for walking routes?**

Go to [www.mapmywalk.com](http://www.mapmywalk.com)

## Walking for Fitness

Fitness Walking, sometimes called Power Walking, is an aerobic workout and that can help improve your cardiovascular fitness and endurance. It's low impact, meaning it's easy on your joints with low risk for injury, and can strengthen and tone the muscles in your legs, buttocks and torso.

- **For overall fitness, walk at a fast pace** a minimum of 20 minutes, ideally 30-60 minutes, five days a week.
- **For cardiovascular fitness**, walk at a brisk pace, on average, around 3.5-4.5 miles per hour.
- **Increase your intensity and burn more calories** by walking at a faster pace, for a longer distance or time, or walk up hills, stairs or the incline on a treadmill.

## Pick Up Your Pace!

- **Increase your walking speed by taking smaller, faster steps.** Resist the urge to lengthen your stride.
- **Swing your arms faster and your feet will follow!** Avoid swinging your arms across or too high in front of your body.
- **Walk on a bike path or long stretch of road** to avoid the stop-and-go slowdowns caused by crossing streets.
- **Listen to high-energy music** and keep pace with the beat.
- **Increase your intensity** with speed intervals by alternating 30 seconds to 1 minute of vigorous power walking with 2-3 minutes at your regular walking pace.

## All you need is a good pair of walking shoes!

A good walking shoe is lightweight with a flexible sole and rounded heel to accommodate the rolling motion of walking from heel to toe. Note: This is different than running shoes, which tend to have a stiff sole and a wide, flared heel.



**Look for a shoe with good arch support and cushioning, as well as ample room in the toe box. Shoes should also fit snugly around the heel to avoid slipping.**  
**A good fit is essential!**



**HealthAdvocate™**  
Always at your side