

Track Your Steps



A pedometer is a small, inexpensive device that attaches to your waistband and counts how many steps you take. Some models also calculate 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. Add a few hundred steps every 2 weeks.

Buddy Up

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

- ✓ **Recruit and 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'll 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 you will succeed.



DID YOU KNOW?

The American Heart Association says a program that includes fast walking can significantly help stroke sufferers recover cardiovascular fitness, muscle coordination, strength, posture, balance and range of motion. **Note:** If you've had a stroke, talk to your health care provider before you increase your exercise level.

Start Off on the Right Foot

A walking program can set the stage for a lifetime of healthy activity. You don't need a lot of preparation, fancy equipment or know-how to start a walking program that works. If you're new to exercise, first check with your health care provider to be sure walking is safe for you.

Simply take a few more steps each day, and walk your way to better health.

- **Take natural steps, not giant strides.** Taking big steps can stress your calf muscles and overextend your knees.
- **Use talking to judge intensity.** Easy talk = casual pace; halting speech = brisk pace; and can't speak = too fast.
- **Lace up properly.** Properly fitted, well-cushioned, supportive walking shoes help 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. Carry a phone if you have one.
- **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 as they approach.
- **Stay in sight.** If you walk at twilight or after dark, wear reflective materials. At all times, wear light-colored clothing that's easy to see.

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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 help you:

- 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.

- Reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis.
- 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 an easy workout. This brochure can help you start and stick with a walking program.

Warm Up & Stretch

Begin walking with a 5-minute body warm-up using your largest muscles repeatedly (such as arm swings and back rotations) prior to brisk walking. This helps stimulate your muscles' range of motion and reduce joint stiffness and post-exercise soreness. Never stretch a cold muscle. A good time to fit in stretching is after any brisk exercise. Hold your stretches to maintain and improve joint range of motion and overall mobility and flexibility.



Ready to Walk?

STEP 1

Start Slowly

Don't expect too much right away. Start out by walking at a moderate pace for just 10 minutes. **Goal:** Walk most days of the week, even if it's just for a few minutes.

STEP 2

Try a 3-Part Walk

Walk slowly for 5 minutes; increase your speed for 10 to 20 minutes; and then end with 5 more minutes of slower walking.

STEP 3

Get Motivated

Set goals. Track your program in a walking journal or app. 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 to 3 minutes per week to the fastest 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's 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 indoors on a treadmill or at the mall can help you stick with your program.



Walking Off Weight

Losing 1 to 2 pounds per week is a sensible plan for weight loss. To lose 1 pound, you'll need to burn 3,500 calories more than you consume in a week. **Try this:** Cut 250 calories from what you eat each day (sodas, snacks or high-calorie fast foods, for example), and walk using the guide below. You can cut 500 calories per day this way to help you reach your weight-loss goal.

For a person weighing 131-160 pounds:

Walking 3.5 mph	Calories burned*
Half-hour	90 to 120
1 hour	180 to 240

Walking 4.5 mph	Calories burned*
Half-hour	120 to 150
1 hour	240 to 300

* This guide is provided by Shape Up America! The calories you burn through physical activity are affected by the type of activity and your weight.

Boost Energy Output

- Look for walking opportunities. Take the stairs at work, walk the escalator or park farther away from the door.
- Walk farther or faster.
- Pump your arms, with your elbows close to your sides.
- Alternate brisk walking with slower walking.
- Burn more calories by walking uphill. **Tip:** Go easy on your knees; take it slowly going downhill.

