

Walking for Life



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Although getting regular physical activity may be challenging, there is an activity almost everyone can do—walking!

Stride Right

Walking is an easy and inexpensive way to be physically active. You can walk anytime and anywhere. Buy a good pair of walking shoes that will support your feet properly and consider the following helpful tips from the National Institutes of Health (NIH):

- Find a walking buddy to help keep you motivated.
- Choose a safe place to walk.
- Dress appropriately for the time of year.
- Drink water before, during and after walking.
- Set goals and reward yourself.
- Keep track of your progress with a walking log or journal.



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No matter how long you walk, it should be divided into three parts. First, warm up by walking slowly. Next, increase your speed to a brisk walk. Your heart rate will rise, but you should be able to talk and breathe without any problems. Finally, towards the end of your walk, slow your speed gradually to let your body cool down.

Health Benefits of Walking

According to NIH, walking can help:

- lift your mood
- burn calories
- lower blood pressure
- decrease risk of heart disease
- control diabetes
- strengthen bones and muscles

Every Step Counts

To squeeze more walking into your daily schedule:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk during your lunch break.
- Park at the far end of the parking lot.
- Take a quick walk after dinner instead of having dessert.

Once you're walking regularly, start using a pedometer, fitness watch or a phone app to count your steps. It can keep you motivated to work towards the Department of Health and Human Services' recommendation of a minimum of 150 minutes of aerobic exercise a week. Start out slowly, gradually adding 500 steps each week until you reach 10,000 steps!

Check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.