

# Walking Program



Even if you have health problems, you can benefit from walking. It can help improve your health and quality of life!

## How can walking help?

Regular walking can:

- Make your heart, lungs, bones and joints stronger.
- Give you more energy.
- Make you look and feel young and healthy.
- Help you sleep better.
- Help control your weight.

## Talk with your health-care provider.

Work with your health-care provider to develop a walking program that is right for you.

## Keep it simple.

- Walk for 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week.
- Walk at a BRISK pace - like you are late for an appointment.
- If you are not used to being active, start out slowly and work up to 30 minutes a day.
- You don't have to walk 30 minutes all at once. You can walk 10 minutes, 3 times a day, or you can walk 15 minutes, 2 times a day. It's your choice!

## Warm up before you start. Cool down after you walk.

- Before you start to walk, do some stretching exercises (see those shown in the photographs below).
- Hold your stretches and do not bounce - this may cause injury.
- Move slowly and stretch only as far as you feel comfortable.
- Walk slowly for 5 minutes before and after your 30 minute BRISK walk.



"Walking is an important part of my life. I do it for me and my family. It helps me deal with stress and stay healthy so I can be there when they need me."



Leg Stretch



Leg Curl



Knee Pull

## Always play it safe.

Walking is good for you, but take steps to help prevent problems:

- Don't wear clothes that are too tight, and wear a comfortable pair of tennis shoes.
- Drink plenty of water before and after walking.
- Follow your health-care provider's instructions.
- During warm weather, walk early in the morning or just before dark to keep cooler.
- During cold weather, wear a scarf or mask over your mouth and wear a hat, or else walk inside (for example, a shopping mall or recreation center).
- Wear sunscreen when you walk outside.

Other safety tips include:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- If you wear headphones, make sure the volume is not too loud.
- Consider walking with a friend so that you can look out for each other. (You can also keep each other motivated!)
- Tell someone when you leave, when they can expect you back, and what route you will take.



## Stick with it!

To keep yourself motivated:

- Make walking part of your regular schedule.
- Keep track of your progress on a calendar.
- Reward yourself when you meet your walking goals. For example, rent a video or get a manicure.
- Plan ahead for things that might get in the way of walking and develop a plan to keep on your walking schedule.
- Sometimes things will come up that will prevent you from walking. If you miss a walking day, get back into your routine as soon as possible.



## Don't overdo it.

Stop and rest if you experience any of these warning signs during walking. Call your health-care provider if these signs continue or are severe.

- Shortness of breath
- Muscle cramps
- Chest pain
- Nausea
- Lightheaded
- Dizzy

## Health-care Provider's Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Next week I will walk \_\_\_\_\_ minutes a day on \_\_\_\_\_ days of the week and I will increase my walking to 30 minutes a day on 5 or more days of the week by \_\_\_\_\_ (Date).

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