

Walking FUNdamentals

Before you begin a walking program



Research revealed two-thirds of people in the United States weigh more than they should and nearly three-quarters don't get the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Walking is a safe, low-impact exercise that is simple and can be added to your daily routine with minimal effort.

Increase your steps and improve your health

Review these steps before you start your walking program.

Step 1 – Talk to your doctor

Most of us are healthy enough to start a walking program without a physical, but it's important to check with your doctor if you have a chronic health condition, like heart disease, osteoporosis or diabetes.

Step 2 – Buy walking shoes

While walking doesn't require any special equipment, it's a good idea to purchase shoes with sturdy but flexible, nonslip soles, good arch support and adequate heel padding.

Step 3 – Warm up and cool down

Start your walking program with a few gentle stretches—stretch slowly without jerking or bouncing. Also, give your body five minutes of slow walking to warm up, and do the same to cool down as you end your walk.



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... walking program *continued*



Step 4 – Pay attention to your form

Try to use good walking form—that's chin up, shoulders slightly back, elbows bent at a 90-degree angle, and toes pointed forward. Your heel should hit the ground first, and then your weight will roll forward on your foot.

Step 5 – Pace yourself

While you walk, take the “talk test” to ensure you're not overdoing it. You should be able to carry on a normal conversation as you walk. If you're out of breath, your pace is too fast. If you can sing, your pace is too slow and you might want to step it up.

Step 6 – Stick to a schedule

Find a convenient time to walk and do your best to stay with it. Pencil your walking time on your calendar and keep it as if it were an appointment.

Step 7 – Walk with a partner

Having a friend, family member or even your dog come along on the walk can motivate you and help you stay on track.

Step 8 – Add steps to your day

Climb the stairs instead of taking the elevator. Park a little farther away in a parking lot.

Make every step you take count toward better health.

