

Walking Workouts

Walking is one of the easiest ways to get in a daily workout. Thirty minutes of brisk walking can reduce your risk for chronic diseases, improve cardiovascular fitness, and help with weight control. These tips will help you get the most out of your walking workout:

- ▶ **Dress smart!** While you can wear most anything to walk, clothing that will keep you dry and comfortable is best. Shoes should have thick, flexible soles and provide adequate space to fit a custom orthotic or cushioning insole if needed. Wear a hat with a brim to protect your face and eyes from the sun. And don't forget sunscreen on all exposed skin!
- ▶ **Safety first.** Walk in a well-lit area or during daylight hours and be aware of your surroundings at all times. Take different routes to vary your routine or opt for a public location such as a local track or shopping mall. If you live in a rural area and walk on the road, wear reflective clothing.
- ▶ **Establish a routine.** Set aside time for light stretching before and after you walk. If you can't always fit a 30-minute walk into your schedule, plan shorter routes based on the time you have available. Avoid walking in hot, humid weather or within two hours of eating.
- ▶ **Use proper walking form.** Recommended form includes:



- Walk with your chin up and your shoulders held slightly back.
 - Walk so that the heel of your foot touches the ground first. Roll your weight forward.
 - Walk with your toes pointed forward.
 - Swing your arms as you walk.
- ▶ **Set a good pace.** Set a pace of 120 steps per minute to achieve basic health benefits. Over time, try to increase that to 135 steps per minute. Aim for at least a moderate level of exercise intensity, or 50-70 percent of your maximum heart rate. If you can carry on a conversation but are too winded to sing while walking, you have reached a moderate level of exercise intensity.
 - ▶ **Measure your progress.** If you have a pedometer or biometric device, check your daily step count. Aim for 10,000 steps a day.

Contact LifeMatters for more suggestions on how to establish a healthy exercise routine. Call 24/7/365.

Source: The Staywell Company, LLC

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