

The Benefits of Walking

Exercise

Aerobic exercise is a positive step toward a healthier life. Besides cardiovascular benefits, regular physical activity such as walking can help you:

Feel Better

Regular physical activity –

- Gives you more energy
- Increase resistance to fatigue
- Helps you relax and feel less tense
- Improves the ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well
- Improves your self image



How To Get Started

Before you start a regular walking program, please consult with your nurse or doctor.

Choose A Time Of Day

To ensure a successful walking program, choose the best time for you. Then stick with a specific time. When do you have the most energy? Some people walk in the morning to get ready for the day. Some walk during lunch hour. Others walk toward the end of the day to relieve tension and relax

Some people don't have a full 30-60 minutes to walk. That's okay. Recent studies suggest that three 10-minute or two 15-minute periods provide about the same benefit as one 30-minute period.

Find A Place To Walk

You should maintain your exercise program year-round. So it's best to choose a place where you can walk all the time. When weather prevents outdoor walking, walk around an indoor track at a school, recreation center, or even a shopping mall.

Regardless of where you walk, be sure it is well lighted.

Choose A Walking Partner

A companion will make walking more enjoyable and help you stick to your program. If you choose to have a walking partner, choose someone who can keep the same schedule you can.

Choose Walking Attire

It's important to walk in the right kind of shoes. Choose shoes with thick, flexible soles that cushion the sole of the foot and absorb shock for the rest of your body.

The Warm Up

Warm up by walking slowly for about five minutes. After that, you can do stretching exercises. This will limber up your body and prepare it for more strenuous exercise. You can also do moderate exercises such as jumping rope.

Stretching exercises include:

Wall Push Stand 1 ½ feet away from a wall, lean forward pushing against the wall with your hands, keeping your heels flat on the ground. Hold it for 10 seconds, then relax. Repeat 1-2 times.

Palm Touch Bend your knees slightly. Try to touch the floor by bending from the waist. *Don't bounce.* Hold the position for 10 seconds, then repeat 1-2 times. If you have lower back problems, do the same thing, but with your legs crossed.

Toe Touch Place your right leg on a chair or railing, making a 90-degree angle with the other leg. Keep the left leg straight and lean forward, touching the toes of the right leg. Again, do not bounce. Switch legs and do the same thing. Repeat the entire exercise 1-2 times.

The Walking Program

Set a pace for your program and don't push yourself too hard when you start. Reduce your pace if:

- you are unable to speak easily in a conversational tone; or
- it takes longer than five minutes for your pulse to slow down after you exercise; or
- you feel faint, have a hard time breathing or have prolonged weakness.

Try to do at least three exercise sessions a week. Each session should consist of a warm up for about 5 minute, an exercise period 30 to 60 minutes depending on where you are in your program, and a five minute cool down.