Put your heart into walking

It’s easy, it’s free, it’s great for your heart

British Heart Foundation
Walk your way to health

Whatever your age, size or physical condition, you are likely to benefit from being more active. The people who can benefit the most are inactive people who start to take regular, moderate activity.

Walking is one of the best ways to get your dose of healthy activity: just 30 minutes of walking spread throughout the day will help to keep your heart healthy and strengthen your muscles. It’s easy, and you can do it anywhere, at any time and either alone or with friends.

We’ve produced this walking guide with practical tips and a personal walking plan to help you succeed in living your life as actively as possible, for the rest of your life. It’s especially important to stay active as you get older.

You can start to become more active simply by reducing the time you spend sitting and by fitting more walking into your daily life. If you’re interested in other types of activities too, see our booklets Get active, stay active or Be active for life. Or, if you have a heart condition, see our booklet Physical activity and your heart. See page 66 on how to order these booklets.

This guide does not replace the advice your health professionals may give you based on their knowledge of your condition.
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Keep your heart healthy – walk

Your heart pumps blood – containing oxygen and nutrients – around your body. The heart is a muscle and, like any muscle, it needs physical activity to keep it in good condition.

Physical activity doesn’t have to mean exhausting runs, buying fancy equipment or joining an expensive health club. **Regular walking can give your heart the workout it needs.**

Physical inactivity is a major health risk and is one of the main causes of death and disability in the developed countries of the world. Over one in every five cases of coronary heart disease in developed countries is due to physical inactivity.¹
What walking can do for you

Inactive people have almost double the risk of dying from coronary heart disease compared with active people.²

**Regular walking can help reduce your risk of coronary heart disease.** It can also reduce your risk of stroke, diabetes, obesity and osteoporosis (thinning of the bones).

**Walking can also help you to:**
- feel better and look good
- increase your energy levels
- sleep better
- save money
- enjoy the environment
- increase your confidence and self-esteem
- reduce stress levels
- manage your weight, and
- make friends and enjoy yourself.

**Did you know?**
Coronary heart disease by itself is the most common cause of death in the UK. Around one in five men and one in seven women die from the disease.³
30 MINUTES X 5 DAYS PER WEEK
How much should I do?

To keep your heart, lungs, muscles and bones in good working order, you should do a total of at least 30 minutes of at least moderate-intensity physical activity a day, on five or more days a week.\(^2\)

Moderate-intensity physical activity means working hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer, but not so hard that you are unable to talk and exercise at the same time, or that you become exhausted. Brisk walking is a good example of moderate-intensity activity that gives your heart the workout it needs.