Walk more - feel the difference

Make your own way to better health
Walking is the perfect activity for health!

Did you know? Walking can...

• Make you feel good
• Give you more energy
• Help you sleep better
• Help you reduce stress
• Keep your heart ‘strong’
• Reduce blood pressure
• Help to manage your weight

Why walk?

• It’s the sure safe way to health and fitness
• It’s a chance to meet people, make friends
• Almost everyone can do it
• You can do it anywhere and any time
• You don’t need any equipment - apart from comfortable walking shoes
• There’s very little risk of injury
• It doesn’t hurt!!
• You can start slowly and build up gently
• It’s free and easy
What walking are you already doing?

Ask yourself....

• How many times have I walked today?
• What was the longest time?

Do you know what the current recommendation is for physical activity?

You don’t have to spend hours, just 30 minutes a day of moderate activity, such as brisk walking, is all it takes to feel the difference.

This might sound a lot all in one go, but you can walk for ten minutes three times a day or 15 minutes twice a day.

‘Brisk’ walking means walking so that you breathe a little faster, feel warmer and have a slightly faster heart beat - it doesn’t need to be ‘hard’ and you should still be able to talk!

The most important thing is that you start ‘where you’re at’ and build up gradually.

IF YOU ARE FREE OF SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS YOU CAN START WALKING MORE WITH CONFIDENCE

Want to know more?
A Small Change is a Big Step!

Tips to get started:

• Think before you drive less than a mile - walk to the local shop or post box
• Throw away the TV remote control!
• Get off the bus a stop earlier
• Park the car further away at the supermarket
• Take the stairs instead of the lift
• Enjoy a walking lunch - walk to the park and eat your sandwiches
• ‘Borrow’ a friend’s dog and take it for a walk
• Walk the children to school when you can

IT ALL COUNTS!!!
MAKE IT PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE!

Ready to get started?
Small Steps to Success!
(One step at a time!)

Getting started

If you can only walk for a couple of minutes and you need to rest that’s OK! Where you have to start isn’t important - it’s where you’re going that counts!

Try to walk on most days of the week - you could start with a 10 minute walk and gradually increase the time you spend walking. If you could do the 10 minute walk twice a day then that would be even better. If you are very unfit you may want to start by walking every other day. Don’t overdo it on your first day! Gradually ease your body into the walk for the first few minutes.

How should I feel?

‘Listen to your body when you walk - if you feel dizzy or develop pain or nausea slow down or stop. If the problem persists see your doctor before walking again. Remember - don’t try to compete with others when walking. Your aim is to steadily improve, rather than walking farther or faster than someone else.
What should I wear?

A good pair of shoes is the only equipment required - any shoes that are comfortable, provide good support, and don't cause blisters will do, but here are some suggestions to help you make your selection:

- Casual shoes with heavy rubber soles. Good running shoes (such as trainers with heavy soles) are good walking shoes, as are some of the lighter walking boots.
- Whatever kind of shoe you select, it should have arch supports and should elevate the heel slightly. Make sure there is adequate room for your toes.
- Choose a shoe with uppers made of materials that 'breathe' such as nylon mesh or leather.
- Clothing - Loose fitting clothing allows you to move more freely. Wear thin layers rather than heavy, chunky clothing!
- If it's a hot day take a bottle of water.

How to develop your walking route

- It's a good idea to stick to areas you are already familiar with if you're walking on your own. You might want to design a circular route that links your local shop with other local features - choose busier, more populated areas. In poor weather conditions you may want to include an indoor shopping centre on your route (no excuses!)
- Investigate local parks, pathways and open spaces.
- A local walking scheme may give you ideas for routes which you could then do by yourself.
Build a Habit!

Your walking plan

Try this plan to put walking into your life:

Starting off

Week 1 two walks of ten minutes on three days per week.

Week 2 and 3 two walks of 12 minutes on four days per week.

Week 4 two walks of 15 minutes on 4 days per week.

Getting going

Week 5 - 9 two walks of 15 minutes per day on four days a week. Try to increase your pace slightly or include a route which has some inclines or low hills. Aim to go walking on 5 days per week.

Staying with it

Week 10 onwards aim for a brisk pace and challenge yourself with steeper inclines or hills.

Experts say that ‘brisk walking’ means doing a mile in 15 - 17 minutes, anything less is a stroll.

Note:

- If you find any week difficult, repeat the week (rather than adding more time) until you are able to progress comfortably.
- If you find it inconvenient to fit in a 30 minute continuous walk then try doing three walks of ten minutes during the day.
- Consider walking a route which has some gentle gradients
Picking up the Pace!

How to walk faster

Start every walk slowly and gradually increase your pace. After about 5 minutes start to walk a little faster so that you:

- Feel slightly warmer
- Breathe a little faster
- And your heart is beating a little faster

Imagine you are late for an appointment! But you should still be able to talk! If you can’t carry on a conversation then you’re going too fast.

At the end of the walk gradually slow down your pace.

A cool down period is a great time to do stretches to improve your flexibility.

Walk tall!!

Keep the body straight and let the arms and legs do the work. Walk naturally and let your arms swing gently to develop rhythm and help balance. Experts say that the walking step should be a rolling motion like this:

- Strike the ground first with your heel
- Roll through the step from heel to toe
- Push off with your toe

Heel strike, roll through, toe push off.

Avoid taking longer steps to increase your speed.

Take more smaller steps rather than lengthening your stride.

Always have a way of measuring progress, so that you know you’re steadily getting fitter. For instance you should gradually find that it takes you less time to complete your walk route, that you feel less puffed out and tired.

Finding it difficult to keep going?
Having problems keeping going?

- Walk with a friend
- Join a walking group
- Build in variety - try a new place to walk
- Leave your walking shoes by the door to remind you!
- Take a look at how far you’ve come - is it easier now to climb the stairs?
- Circle each day that you walk on your calender - look at how well you’re doing
- Keep a diary - write down what you do and the route you took

- Try to build walking into your daily routines for example collecting the newspaper, collecting the children from school
- Establish a routine - go for a stroll with family or friends after dinner.

Visit us on: www.whi.org.uk
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