Walk more - feel the difference

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 surest 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 fun 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!

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 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 reasons 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 faster or farther than someone else

Ready to get started?
Walk more - feel the difference

Small Steps to Success!

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 a roomy toe area for your toes
- Choose a shoe with upper made of materials that breathe, such as nylon mesh or leather
- Clothing - lose-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 quieter, 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

Ready to pick up the pace?
HAVE YOU GOT DIFFERENT GEARS?

Build a Habit!

Your walking plan
Try this plan to put walking into your life:
- Starting off
  - Week 1: Do two walks of ten minutes on three days per week.
  - Week 2: Do two walks of ten minutes on four days per week.
  - Week 3: Do two walks of ten minutes on five days per week.
- Getting going
  - Week 4: Do two walks of fifteen minutes on four days per week.
  - Week 5: Do two walks of fifteen minutes on five 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

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
- Your heart is beating a little faster

Imagine you are late for an appointment! But you should always be able to tell 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.

Walking 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

Heat stroke, roll through, too push off.
Avoid taking longer steps to increase your speed.
Take 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