

Walking

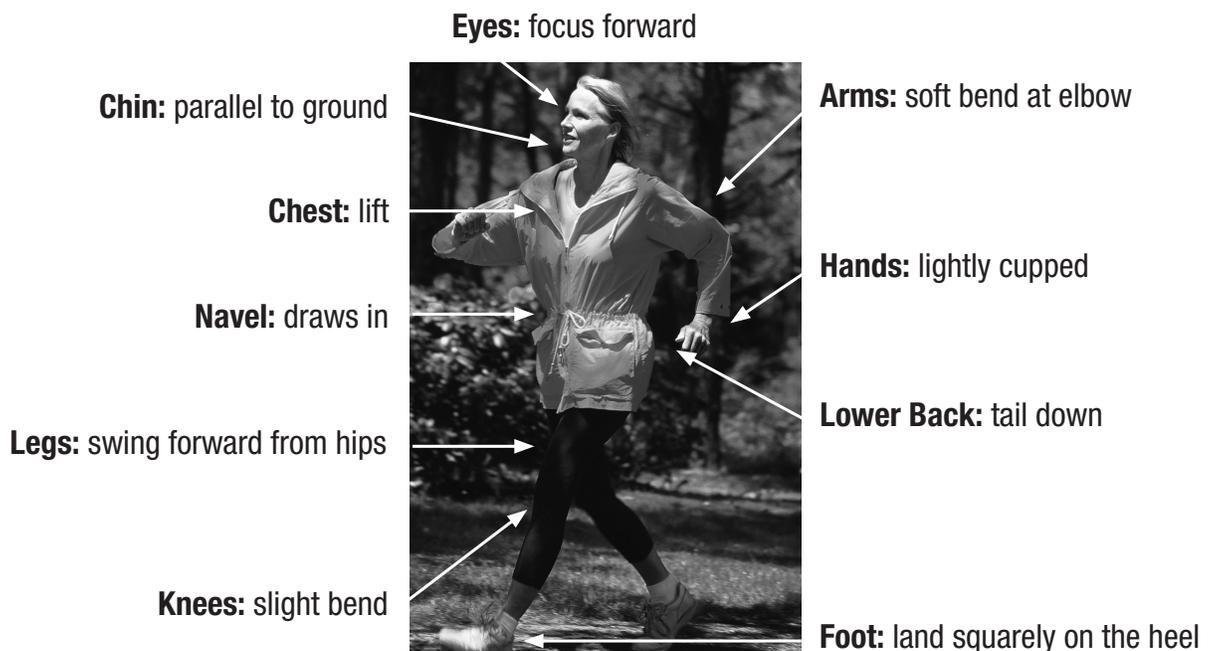
Walking is the most common exercise in the world. So, what's so special about it?

- It's simple to do and no special skills are required
- Minimal equipment is needed—just good shoes and socks
- It's great for weight-loss. A study by the National Weight Control Registry showed walking was the primary form of exercise for folks who have lost weight and kept it off
- Time is on your side. Ten minutes here and 10 minutes there will do just fine. You can accumulate walking time over the course of a day and still reap the health benefits
- Live longer; be healthier. The Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research performed a study showing that walking reduced blood pressure and increased HDL (good cholesterol)
- Walk off blues. A Duke University Medical Center study demonstrated that walking was a viable option in the treatment of depression for a group of elderly patients
- A casual walk or a stroll designed for the beginner will help you build endurance without overdoing it
- The average pace is 2 ½ to 3 ½ mph which equals a 17 to 24 minute mile
- The average number of steps per mile is 2,000 (ranging from 1,600 while running at a six min/mile pace to 2,300 while walking at a 20 min/mile pace)

If you've reached a fitness or weight plateau, or you have gained confidence and endurance as a lifestyle walker, you may want to kick it up a notch to fitness walking. Try a brisk pace of 3½ to 4½ mph (one mile in 14-17 minutes) for a few seconds during your normal walk.

The image and text to the right point out some tips for good form.

Fitness Walking



Warm Up

All walks should begin with a 5-10 minute warm up to slightly elevate your body temperature. When completed, you should feel warmer. While walking at a moderate pace, roll your shoulders forward and backward, lift them to your ears and pull them down again. Move your head from side to side, and flex your hands as you walk.



Easy Stretch

Stop to do an easy stretch after the warm up. Your muscles will be more receptive to light stretching then. Focus on your calves and hamstrings:

- Wedge right foot up against a railing, curb or flat vertical surface.
- Exhale and pull hips toward railing allowing left heel to lift off floor.
- Hold up to 30 seconds.
- Switch legs.



Pretzel Stretch

Use this stretch to loosen up muscles in hips, lower back and glutes.

- Sit on a step or chair.
- Place your left ankle on your right knee. Make sure your right knee is directly over you right heel.
- Hold for up to 30 seconds.

Working Out

This sample plan will begin with lifestyle walking for four to six weeks. Once the walks feel comfortable and manageable, you're ready to add more. (Note: Check with your physician before going into any Zone 4* exercise).

Easing In	Building a Base	Maintaining a Schedule
Weeks 1 and 2	Weeks 3 and 4	Weeks 5 and 6
Three times/week	Four times/week	Five times/week
10-15 minutes in the morning	10-15 minutes in the morning	15-20 minutes in the morning
10-15 minutes in the afternoon or evening	10-15 minutes in the afternoon	15-20 minutes in the afternoon
	10-15 minutes in the evening	15-20 minutes in the evening

Cool Down

Aim for a five minute cool down period after you've reached your goal for time and/or distance. Walk at a slower pace and then repeat the same warm up stretches you did prior at the beginning of your walk. Your body will be warmer now and will respond better to stretching. Make sure your HR is down to Zone 1* before you stop.

Fun Walking Workouts

As you know, walking is a great way to “travel” and exercise too. Here's a way to add variety to your walking program. Using the chart below, select and schedule four times during the week when you can walk for 40 minutes. Be sure to check your HR before, during and after your work out.

Program #1	
Warm Up	Stretch and march in place for five minutes.
Regular Walk	Walk at an aerobic pace for 10 minutes.
Power Walk	Walk two minutes like a race walker; stand tall & swing your arms vigorously.
Station # 1	Stop & face the curb, standing in the street. Step up on the curb with the right foot, then the left. Next, step down with the right foot, then the left. Repeat 10 times.
Power Walk	Walk two minutes like a race walker; stand tall & swing your arms vigorously.
Regular Walk	Walk five minutes at an aerobic pace.
Cool Down	Walk at a comfortable pace for five minutes. Stretch.

Program #2 Do program #1 and then add the following:	
Station # 2	March in place 10 times. Extend arms in front, palms down. Lift right knee as high as you can and touch left hand. Lift left knee and touch to right hand. Repeat five times. March in place 10 minutes.
Power Walk	Walk two minutes like a race walker; stand tall & swing your arms vigorously.
Regular Walk	Walk 10 minutes at an aerobic pace.
Cool Down	Walk at a comfortable pace for five minutes. Stretch.

Keep It Interesting

There are other things you can do to “spice up” your walking routine. Consider walking in a nearby park or mall. Find a walking partner or get a family member to join you. Also, use your walk as a time to explore and discover your community. Be sure to take your heart rate before, during and after your walking routine. Continue to try to achieve a heart rate between the two numbers you calculated at the beginning of the program. Increase your walking program to a 35 minute walk, four times per week. If you are already at this level, try a 40 minute walk, four times per week. Remember to warm up and cool down. On the days you don’t plan to walk, do stretching and strengthening exercises. Also, do as many “sit down” activities as possible. (Ask your provider for the exercise module entitled *Seated Workouts*.)

* These refer to different Heart Rate Zones for exercise. For more information on monitoring your heart rate and heart rate zones, consult with your provider or ask them for the Exercise Module entitled *Determining Your Heart Rate*.