

Walking Your Way to Better Health

Walking is one of the easiest and safest ways to get more exercise every day. It is an easy form of exercise which takes little or no equipment, other than a good pair of walking shoes. It can be done almost anywhere... outside, indoors at a mall, walking track or hallway. Best of all, it's an activity you can enjoy by yourself, with friends, family, a pet, or join a walking group. Start making new friends while you get fit at the same time!



What you need to get started:

- A good pair of shoes
- Comfortable, loose-fitting clothing (remember to dress for weather)
- A safe place to walk
- A watch to time yourself (optional)
- A walking plan that suits your lifestyle

Walking can be a great social activity and is the #1 physical activity preferred by older adults.



Benefits of Walking

- Revitalizes the mind, reduces fatigue, increases energy
- Relieves stress & tension
- Reduces risk of certain lifestyle diseases (heart disease, stroke, hypertension & diabetes)
- Helps boost your self-image
- Assists with weight loss
- Helps flexibility & co-ordination, reducing the risk of falls
- Increases bone density, helping to prevent osteoporosis & reduce risk of injury from a fall (reduces risk of hip fracture by 40%)^{1,2}

4 Steps to a Great Walk

- Step 1: *Warm up* by walking slowly for 5 minutes
- Step 2: *Walk briskly* using proper technique
- Step 3: *Cool down* by walking slowly again for 5 minutes
- Step 4: *Stretch* afterward to help prevent stiffness



Proper Walking Technique:

- Walk with good posture (chin up and shoulders slightly back)
- With each step, your heel touches the ground first
- Roll over the ball of your foot onto your toes
- One foot bears all your weight until your other heel strikes the ground
- Swing arms naturally (Don't keep your hands in your pockets.)
- Breathe normally (in 1,2,3 out 1,2,3)

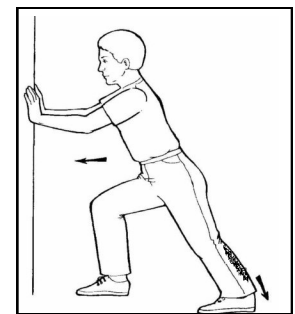
Other Tips:

- Add variety by changing your route
- Take a personal radio, CD player or iPod to listen to
- Dress in layers so that you can adjust for weather conditions
- Walk inside if the weather is bad (too hot, too cold, too wet, too icy)
- Wear a hat and sunscreen in the summer
- Carry a water bottle and cell phone
- Use walking poles for balance or to enhance your workout

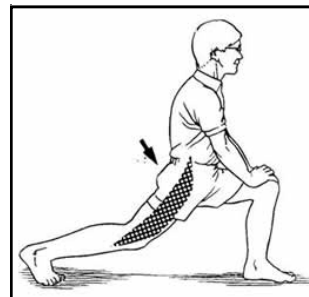
Proper Stretching Technique:

- Stretches should feel comfortable
- Maintain good posture
- Breathe normally, without holding your breath during the stretch
- Hold stretches for 30-45 seconds
- Change positions slowly

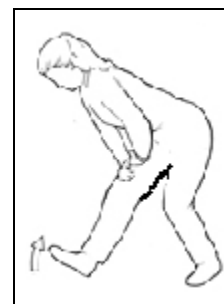
Calf Stretch



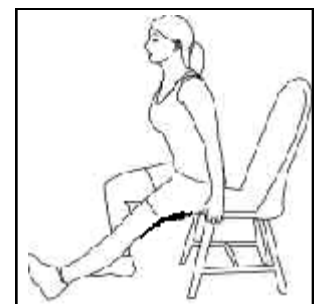
Hip Flexor Stretch



Hamstring Stretch



(Standing)



(Seated)

Quadriceps Stretch



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Physical Activity - do it for life!



Make sure to consult your physician before starting any new type of physical activity.

***For more information or resources for Older Adults, contact Forever...in motion at (306)844-4080**

References

1. Kort, W.M. Exercise and the Preservation of Bone Health with Aging, ASBMR 2011
2. Martyn-St. James M, Carroll S. Meta-analysis of walking for preservation of bone mineral density in post-menopausal women. Bone. 2008 Sep 43(3):521-31