

## Health & Life®

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### Walking, A Great Workout...

Walking is one of the easiest ways to be physically active. We can do it almost anywhere and at any time; it is also inexpensive. All we need is a pair of shoes with sturdy heel support.

Walking will give us more energy, make us feel well and relax, reduce stress, help us sleep better, tone our muscles, helps control our appetite and increase the number of calories our body uses...

Before we begin a walking program, we should talk to our family physician and make sure that we do not have any heart problems, while engaged in physical activities do not experience chest pains, do not often feel faint or have dizzy spells or we are not seriously short of breath.

We have to make sure that our blood pressure is not elevated, have bone or joint problems or arthritis, or have any other health problems – We must consult our family physician before starting any exercise program.

We should set aside enough time in our schedule to start an effective walking program. Planning is very important; we should choose a safe place to walk, find a partner or group of people to walk with us – motivation is very important. Our walking partner should be able to walk at our speed...

We should wear shoes with thick flexible soles that will cushion our feet and absorb shocks, wear clothes that will keep us dry and comfortable and choose synthetic fabrics that absorb sweat and remove it from the skin.

During wintertime we should wear a knit cap and gloves; in the summer a cap or visor.

Light, slow stretching before and after we walk helps – remember not to bounce.

Weather should not keep us from doing a good walk; if it is raining, cold or too warm, an excellent option is to go to a shopping mall and walk from one end to the other and back. This way we may not be able to do the fast walking, but it is still a good workout. Something to keep in mind: the plan is to walk... not to shop or to eat. Leave your credit cards at home and avoid the food court – most of the food served there is fast cooked, loaded with fat and sugars...

How do we do it?... We should start walking slowly for about five to ten minutes, then slightly increase our speed for the next five to ten minutes. Finally, to cool down, we should walk slowly again for another five to ten minutes.

Walking at least three times per week would greatly benefit our health. Adding two to three minutes per week to the fast walk would improve our conditioning; If we walk less than three times per week, we should increase the fast walk more slowly.

To avoid stiff or sore muscles or joints, we should start gradually; over several weeks, we could start walking faster, going further, and walking for longer periods of time.

The more we walk, the better we will feel... and use more calories.

Safety is very important when planning our route and the time of our walks; we should do it in the daytime or at night in well-lighted areas, with a partner or a group, at all times. We should not wear jewelry or headphones and be aware of our surroundings at all times in order to avoid joggers, cyclists or cars.

### **Stretching routines:**

**Side Reaches** - Reach one arm over your head and to the side. Keep your hips steady and your shoulders straight to the side. Hold for about ten seconds and repeat on the other side.

**Knee Pull** - Lean your back against a wall. Keep your head, hips, and feet in a straight line. Pull one knee to your chest, hold for about ten seconds, then repeat with the other leg.

**Wall Push** - Lean your hands on a wall with your feet about three or four feet away from the wall. Bend one knee and point it toward the wall. Keep your back leg straight with your foot flat and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold for about ten seconds and repeat with the other leg.

**Leg Curl** - Pull your right foot to your buttocks with your right hand. Keep your knee pointing straight to the ground. Hold for about ten seconds and repeat with your left foot and hand.

Walking right is very important; Walk with your chin up and your shoulders held slightly back. Walk so that the heel of your foot touches the ground first; roll your weight forward. Walk with your toes pointed forward. Swing your arms as you walk. If you walk less than three times per week, increase the fast walk time more slowly...

Enjoy your walk!...

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