



WALKING GUIDE

This guide has been developed by the healthcare experts at Walk with a Doc to teach you about the power of walking and support you as you develop a walking routine. Please keep in mind that this is simply a *guide* and nothing more. Reach out to your healthcare provider if you have any questions, and don't overthink it - just put one foot in front of the other and walk!



BENEFITS OF WALKING

Research has shown that you could gain up to three hours of life for each hour that you're physically active! Fortunately, even moderate activity such as walking can provide these incredible health benefits. Walking truly is one of the best things you can do for your overall health as it has the power to prevent or even treat many chronic diseases.

“WALKING IS THE BEST MEDICINE”
-HIPPOCRATES”

PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS

- Lowers risk of heart disease & stroke
- Lowers risk of several types of cancer
- Regulates blood pressure & cholesterol
- Helps prevent and manage type 2 diabetes
- Helps maintain a healthy weight
- Helps ease arthritis pain & stiffness
- Strengthens muscles & bones
- Lowers risk of falls



MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

- Reduces stress & anxiety
- Lowers risk of depression
- Improves mood
- Helps you sleep better
- Improves energy levels
- Improves cognition & creativity
- Lowers risk of dementia & Alzheimer's
- Improves overall quality of life



See 100 reasons to walk at walkwithadoc.org/100reasons



TYLIPROTEIN (HDL OR "GOOD" CHOLESTEROL) + REDUCES HEART ATTACKS BY 86% (COMBINED WITH OTHER FACTORS) + INCREASES EFFICIENCY OF HEART + MAKES OUR HEART MUSCLE STRONGER - LOWERS HEART RATE + INCREASES YOUR METABOLISM + SLOWLY LAYS DOWN FAT + MAKES DIGESTION MORE EFFICIENT + STIMULATES INTESTINAL MOVEMENTS, RESULTING IN BETTER REGULATION OF WASTES + REDUCES CHANCES FOR COLONIC MUSCLE CONTRACTION AND REACTION TIME + HELPS HEAL THEIR SKIN DUE TO THE FACT THAT SKIN PORES OPEN MORE DURING EXERCISE, RESULTING IN MORE EFFICIENT REMOVAL OF DIRT AND IMPURITIES + BEING AVAILABLE TO IT + INCREASES SIZE OF BLOOD VESSELS + HELPS STAY AWAY FROM PAIN + REDUCES ENDORPHIN LEVELS + ARE ELATED + INCREASES SIZE OF BLOOD VESSELS + BECAUSE HORMONE EPINEPHRINE IS RELEASED + BOOSTS ENERGY + IMPROVES SELF-CONFIDENCE + SINCE BODY AND MIND ARE IMPROVED AND STRENGTHENED, MORE LIKELY TO BE SELF-CONTROLLED + PROVIDES SOURCE OF PLEASURE AND JOY + CAN RELIEVE HEADACHES + CAN REDUCE THE RISK TO SMOKE + BECAUSE THE CIGARETTE BRUSH AND STRESS KILLS FROM A BRIEF WORKOUT CAN REPLACE SOME OF THE FEELINGS SMOKERS GET FROM TOXIN OF THE BODY + IMPROVES BONE DENSITY + PREVENTS OSTEOPOROSIS + REDUCES JOINT DISCOMFORT + HELPS MANAGE ARTHRITIS + ALLOWS ONE TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEIR BODIES AND ENJOY SEX AND ROMANTIC EFFECT ON FIBRINOGEN LEVELS + ALLY HATES MENSTRUAL CRAMPS + IMPROVES ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE + CAN ADD YEARS TO ONE'S LIFE + ENHANCES QUALITY OF LIFE + REDUCES PAIN AND SEVERE MEDICAL BILLS + REDUCES ANXIETY BY CAUSING FEWER WORRIES ABOUT HEALTH + CREATES BETTER PERFORMANCE AT WORK + ALLOWS ONE TO STAY INDEPENDENT AS THEY GET OLDER + KEEPS HEALTH CARE ALLOWS ONE TO BECOME MORE FAMILIAR WITH THEIR BODY AND ITS FUNCTIONING + CAN STIMULATE YOU MENTALLY + LETS ONE EAT MORE WITHOUT GAINING WEIGHT + INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY AT WORK + ADDS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW FAR SHOULD I WALK?

Experts suggest that it's more about time than distance. The CDC recommends that adults aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, which is about 20-30 minutes per day. If you're just getting started on your physical activity journey, start with what you can and then try to do a little bit more each day.

HOW FAST SHOULD I WALK?

Aim for a *brisk* walk that elevates your heart rate. Try using the "talk test", which means you should be able to talk in complete sentences, but singing should be difficult. Go ahead and give it a try - may we suggest a little Katrina & The Waves?

"I'm walking on sunshine, woah oh!"



Did You Know?



THE IDEA OF NEEDING 10,000 STEPS PER DAY ORIGINATED IN THE 1960S AS A JAPANESE MARKETING CAMPAIGN AIMED AT SELLING Pedometers. IN FACT, RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT JUST 7,000 STEPS PER DAY CAN HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON YOUR HEALTH.

IS WALKING THE BEST EXERCISE?

Simply put, the best exercise that you can do is the one you'll do! Walking is a popular choice because it's effective, low impact, safe, and best of all - it's free! Find an activity you enjoy and stick with it. Whether it's walking, swimming, cycling, tennis, golf, hiking, or even dancing - all forms of movement count!



WALKING IN NATURE

The power of walking is amplified when it's done outdoors! Experts recommend spending at least 120 minutes per week in nature, but every bit can have a positive effect on your health. Research shows that "Vitamin N" can...

- Reduce stress, depression, and anxiety
- Boost creativity, cognition, and memory
- Boost immune system function
- Improve quality of sleep
- Relieve pain

“THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS BAD WEATHER, ONLY UNSUITABLE CLOTHING
-ALFRED WAINWRIGHT”



WEATHER SAFETY TIPS

Make sure you check the weather forecast before heading outdoors. Start slow, take plenty of breaks, and follow these tips to stay safe in the elements.

TIPS	HOT WEATHER	COLD WEATHER
HYDRATE	Whether you're walking in hot or cold weather, make sure you drink plenty of water before, during, and after your walk. Note: talk to your doctor if they have you taking water pills or limiting your water intake.	
PROTECT SKIN	Apply sunscreen (SPF 15+) to exposed skin 30 mins. before your walk.	
DRESS FOR SUCCESS	Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, sunglasses, and a hat to protect your skin.	Wear a hat, gloves, shoes with good traction, and scarf/mask to warm the air. Dress in layers: base layer to wick sweat, middle layer to keep you warm, and outer shell to protect from the wind.
WATCH FOR SIGNS OF	Heat stroke/exhaustion - if your heart is pounding, you're gasping for breath, or you become lightheaded, confused, weak, or faint... STOP! Rest in the shade or a cool area.	Frostbite - if you notice numb or discolored skin or abnormal joint & muscle stiffness, it's time to head inside.

CHOOSING A WALK LOCATION

Here are some resources to help find a safe and accessible walk location near you:

- Search for WWAD locations at walkwithadoc.org.
- Download the free All Trails app at alltrails.com.
- Visit your city or county parks department website.
- Walk in your neighborhood - create a route at mapmywalk.com.
- Ask your local school if their track is open to the public.
- If you're concerned about balance or you're a wheelchair-user, look for a flat, paved path. It's also helpful to have water fountains, bathrooms, and benches.

INDOOR WALKING

If you aren't able to walk outside, find an indoor location like a shopping mall, school gym, or even grocery store. You can also walk from the comfort of your living room with the [Walk at Home](#) YouTube channel.



WHAT GEAR DO I NEED?

- Fortunately, walking doesn't require a lot of special gear or equipment!
- A pair of supportive, comfortable shoes can help prevent injury.
- Some people like to use walking poles, a cane, or a walker for added stability.
- If visibility is poor, wear reflective clothing or bring a flashlight.

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YOU HAVE EVERYTHING
YOU NEED TO WALK
YOURSELF TOWARD A
HEALTHIER LIFE

-DR. CHARLES MOORE
WWAD LEADER IN ATLANTA

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STRETCHING

To prevent injury and reduce soreness, the Arthritis Foundation recommends:

- Warm up - march in place or walk slowly.
- Stretch your hamstrings, calves, and groin for 10-20 seconds each.
- Walk!
- Cool down and then stretch again.

PROPER FORM

- Don't overthink it!
- Strike the ground with your heel first and then roll onto your toes.
- Try to have good posture and engage your core to take pressure off your back.

ACCOUNTABILITY

When life gets busy, how do you make sure you stick with your walking routine?

- Make a commitment to yourself, a family member, a friend, or even your dog.
- Get an activity tracker and set a daily steps goal.
- Join your local Walk with a Doc program or other walking club.
- Join the Walk with a Doc Group on Facebook to connect with others.
- Subscribe to a podcast or listen to music while you walk - visit walkwithadoc.org/spotify for our favorite walking tunes!
- Sign up for a 5K or other event - visit halhigdon.com for a sample training plan.

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I STARTED BY WALKING A MILE. BY THE END OF THE YEAR, I COMPLETED MY FIRST MARATHON. YOU CAN ACHIEVE BIG THINGS, BUT IT ALL STARTS WITH SMALL STEPS.

-AMAR KUMAR
WWAD PARTICIPANT
IN COLUMBUS



ADDING STEPS TO YOUR DAY

On those busy days when you don't have time for a dedicated walk, try these simple yet effective ways to get some extra steps throughout the day:

- Park a bit farther away in parking lots. Bonus points if you can walk or bike to your destination instead!
- Host a walking meeting for your next work meeting or social gathering.
- During TV commercials or while waiting for the oven, spend a few minutes walking in place or doing some bodyweight exercises like squats.
- When you're on a phone call, use it as an opportunity to walk around. Better yet, schedule "walking calls" with a friend!
- Skip the elevator and opt for the stairs if you're able.
- Make family time active - plan weekend hikes, bike rides, or even a friendly game of frisbee in the park.



WALKING PLANS

You can search online for walking plans to help keep you accountable. Below is an example from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, which suggests that you ease into a routine by walking slowly the first 3 weeks, and then work your way up to a brisk pace.

WEEK	MINUTES PER DAY	NUMBER OF DAYS
Week 1	10	4
Week 2	10	4
Week 3	15	5
Week 4	20	5
Week 5	30	5
Week 6	25	6
Week 7	30	5
Week 8	35	5

ONE FINAL TIP

Although she encouraged a different means of transportation, Dory from Finding Nemo had the right idea with “Just keep swimming.” Remember, every little bit of movement is a STEP toward better health.



**JUST
KEEP
WALKING**

About Walk with a Doc:

As an international non-profit organization, Walk with a Doc is committed to inspiring communities through movement and conversation with walking groups led by local doctors, healthcare providers, or medical students.

Started in 2005 by Dr. David Sabgir, a cardiologist in Columbus, Ohio, the program now extends to over 500 communities throughout the world. The walks are a fun, free, and safe place to get physical activity, learn about health, and meet new people. Learn more at www.walkwithadoc.org.

