

STEP-by-STEP

WALK OFF EXTRA WEIGHT AND IMPROVE HEALTH PROBLEMS

Walking is a gentle, low-impact exercise that can ease you into a higher level of fitness and health. Walking also has many health benefits. It can help lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of or manage type 2 diabetes, control weight, improve mood, and increase fitness.

TAKE TEN STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

1. Talk with your doctor about a routine that is safe for your level of fitness.
2. Have the right gear. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Choose shoes with proper arch support, a firm heel, and thick flexible soles to cushion your feet and absorb shock. Wear reflective gear when it's dark so motorists can see you.
3. Maintain good form. Maintain good posture to help you avoid backaches, muscle pain, and injuries.
4. Pull in your stomach muscles to set your pelvis in neutral, a position you will appreciate during longer walks.
5. Keep your chin parallel to the ground and your eyes focused 12 to 20 feet ahead to reduce strain on your neck and shoulders.
6. The impact of your first step should be from heel to toe, in a gently rolling motion. Push off with the back leg, toes leading the way to the ground slightly in front of your torso.
7. Use your arms. With each forward step, swing the opposite arm behind you. Point the arm toward the ground.
8. Start slow to build stamina. When you feel confident, add 5 minutes, then another 5, and so on.
9. Set walking goals, such as weight loss, reduced stress, or better overall health.
10. Reap the rewards. You will feel better and look better.



Action Step

On busy days when you can't find time to walk 30 minutes all at once, take three 10-minute walks when you can fit them in.

TIPS

- **Warm Up:** Spend about five minutes walking slowly to warm up your muscles.
- **Stretch:** Gently stretch your muscles, including calves, quadriceps, and hamstrings.
- **Cool Down:** To reduce stress on your heart and muscles, end each walk slowly.