

Walk Your Way to Fitness



Starting an exercise program can seem like a daunting task, but it is really as simple as getting off the couch and walking out your front door. Walking is one of the easiest and most beneficial forms of exercise. It burns calories, is easy on your joints, strengthens your bones and muscles, reduces stress and reduces your risk of chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. Best of all, walking requires no expensive, special equipment, can be done anywhere and it's free!

You can begin your program by walking for 20 minutes every day (10 minutes in one direction and 10 minutes back) for one week. Each week add five minutes to your total walking time. Keep increasing the amount of time you walk daily until you are at your walking goal. Below are seven tips to help get you started. Talk to us today about designing a walking program to improve your overall health.

- 1. Start slow and easy.** Don't try to burn up the miles your first week out.
- 2. Take time to stretch.** Walk a few minutes first and then stretch; this helps prevent injuries.
- 3. Practice good walking posture.** Keep elbows close to your body. Each arm should move forward and backward with the opposite foot. Also, keep your chin up. This helps align your posture for maximum benefit.
- 4. Drink plenty of water** before, during and after your walk.
- 5. Invest in proper footwear.** Comfortable walking shoes with a flexible sole and plenty of toe room are a good choice. Some shoes are even designed to help with any walking issues you may have, like overpronation. Also, choose socks made of materials that will help keep your feet dry to prevent blisters.
- 6. Dress appropriately.** Don't forget a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen when you need them during the day. At night, wear clothing with reflective materials so you are visible to others.
- 7.** While not a necessity, **a personal stereo can be a great energizer** by keeping you moving to the music—but be careful not to get too lost in the music and become endangered by the traffic.