

Walking Program Sequence

1. Warm up - Warming up is exercising at a lower intensity in order to get the blood circulating and let your body know that you are preparing for exercise. For many of your walks it will only be necessary to warm up about five minutes. As you progress through your walking program you will need to warm up longer on days you will do your fast workouts.

2. Flexibility exercises - These exercises are part of your warm up and should be done after you have warmed up with 5 to 10 minutes of easy walking. The faster you plan to walk the more time you will need to dedicate to flexibility exercises. There are many different exercises in this group. Here are a few to try:

***Toe points** -- Stand on one leg and lift the other foot off the floor. Gently point your toe and hold for a few seconds. Next flex your foot pointing your toes up. Do this five or ten times on each foot.

***Ankle Circles** -- While standing on one leg lift the other foot off the floor. Gently point your toe and rotate your ankle. Do about ten circles in each direction. This exercise can be performed while standing, sitting, or lying on your back with leg raised.

***Overhead Reach** -- Stand with your feet hip distance apart. Reach up with one arm and then reach over your head and to the opposite side. Keep your hips steady and your shoulders straight. Relax and repeat with the other side. While standing on one leg lift the other foot off the floor. Gently point your toe and rotate your ankle. Do about ten circles in each direction. This exercise can be performed while standing, sitting, or lying on your back with leg raised.

***The Twist** -- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your arms straight out, parallel to ground. Keep your lower body stationary while swinging your arms from side to side. Do this several times to loosen up your waist, back, and shoulders.

***Arm Circles** -- Hold your arms straight out to your side parallel to the ground. Make small circles going backward, gradually getting larger and larger. Rest for a second and do the same thing in the forward direction.

3. Walk - Now that you have warmed up you should be ready to complete your walk at your normal walking pace. For the first few weeks do not push too hard. Your breathing should be elevated, but you should not be gasping for air. A rule of thumb that works for most people is... If you cannot talk you are walking too fast, if you can carry a tune you are walking too slowly.

4. Cool down - At the end of your walk you need to walk at a slower pace to cool down. The harder you have worked out the longer you should cool down. In the beginning your walks are very short and you only need to cool down a couple of minutes. As you're walking time and intensity extends so should your cool down period.

5. Stretch - This is such a neglected area for many people. Start off right and take the time to stretch AFTER every workout. In the beginning stretches should take at least 5 minutes. As you increase distance and pace you will probably need to stretch longer.

Important rules for stretching:

***Never stretch cold muscles.** The best time to stretch is after your walk. If you have problem areas they can be stretched prior to your walk, but only do this after you have warmed up.

***Do not bounce.** Go into a stretch slowly and hold gently. Stretch to the point of feeling a gentle pull, but never to the point of pain

***Hold each stretch for 30 to 40 seconds.** If you have problems with a particular area stretch that area twice. (hold for 30-40 seconds release, then stretch again.)

There are so many stretches it is impossible to cover them all. Be sure to stretch all the major muscle groups, and put extra focus on any areas you have trouble with.

Find a few recommended stretches below:

***Calf Stretch** -- Stand on your toes on a step or curb. Hold on to something for balance. Remove your left foot and slowly allow the right heel to move down. Hold this position. Be sure to keep your body upright and straight. Release and repeat on the other side.

Another calf stretch -- Take a big step forward with your left foot, keeping your right heel on the ground. Hold the position and repeat on the other side. Be sure to keep your body upright and your abs tight, do not arch your back.

***Shin Stretch** -- Standing up, hold on to a stationary object. Stand with your weight on one leg and straighten it. Place your other foot on the ground, with toes pointed and your toenails toward the floor. With the tops of your toes touching the ground, roll your foot and leg forward, from the ankle. Release and repeat on the other side.

***Hamstring and Lower Back** -- Slowly bend forward from your waist with your knees slightly bent. Reach for the floor and hold. Only bend as far as comfortable.

***Outer thigh and buttocks and spine** -- While lying on your back bring your right knee up. Place your left hand on your thigh and gently pull it over to your left side. Do not pull at the knee. Your shoulders, left leg and back should remain flat. Pull gently. Then repeat on the left side.

***Lower back** -- While lying on your back, bring both knees up towards the chest with the hands. Round the lower back and relax into the stretch. Don't do this stretch on a hard surface...it will bruise the spine!

***Quadriceps Stretch** -- Standing up, hold on to a stationary object. Bend your right knee, bringing your foot toward your buttocks. Keeping your left knee slightly bent, grasp your right ankle with the opposite hand. Slowly pull your leg up and back, bringing your foot as high as comfortable. Repeat with other leg. (To protect your knee... think of pulling the quads back rather than pulling the foot toward your buttocks.)

***Shoulder Stretch** -- Standing upright, cross left arm over chest. Place your right hand on your upper arm and pull arm in tight to chest. Be sure to keep shoulders down and do not pull at the elbow. Hold, and then repeat stretch with other arm.

***Neck Relaxer** -- Turn and look over your right shoulder and hold. Repeat on the left side. Don't hyper-extend the neck, or tilt it backwards.

Next, gently drop the head so that the ear goes towards the right shoulder and hold. Return to upright position. Repeat forward and on the left side. Keep the spine in an upright position and don't hyper-extend the neck, jerk, or tilt the head backwards.

Beginning Walking Program

	Pace	Time Each day	Number of days	Week Total
Week 1	Slow	10 minutes	4 days	40 min
Week 2	Slow	10 minutes	4 days	40 min
Week 3	Slow	15 minutes	5 days	1 hr 15 min
Week 4	Slow - Brisk	20 minutes	5 days	1 hr 40 min
Week 5	Brisk	30 minutes	5 days	2 hrs 30 min
Week 6	Brisk	25 minutes	6 days	2 hrs 30 min
Week 7	Brisk	30 minutes	5 days	2 hrs 30 min
Week 8	Brisk	35 minutes	5 days	2 hrs 55 min

Tips for a successful walking program:

1. Start your program slow:

If you have not been physically active, gradually build up your exercise time to 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, for a total of 150 minutes. Be patient with your workout..."slow and steady wins the walk"

2. Start your program with a warm-up:

Allow a 5-minute WARM-UP period. This warms up your muscles and gets them ready for activity. Starting and ending your exercise slowly may also prevent muscle injury.

3. Listen to your body:

You should be able to walk and talk while exercising. You are going too fast if you can't complete a sentence. If you experience muscle tightness, take an extra day off to rest. Select good walking shoes.

4. Pay attention to warning signs:

STOP exercising if you feel dizzy, feel faint, have trouble breathing or experience pain/pressure in your chest during or after the exercise. Call your physician immediately and do not engage in physical activity until you are cleared to do so.

Intermediate/Advanced Walking Program

	FOR HEALTH	FOR FITNESS	FOR PERFORMANCE
Week 1	100 minutes total	150 minutes total	250 minutes total
Week 2	110 minutes total	160 minutes total	260 minutes total
Week 3	120 minutes total	170 minutes total	270 minutes total
Week 4	130 minutes total	180 minutes total	280 minutes total
Week 5	140 minutes total	190 minutes total	290 minutes total
Week 6	150 minutes total	200 minutes total	300 minutes total
Week 7	160 minutes total	210 minutes total	310 minutes total
Week 8	170 minutes total	220 minutes total	320 minutes total
Week 9	180 minutes total	230 minutes total	330 minutes total
Week 10	190 minutes total	240 minutes total	340 minutes total
Week 11	200 minutes total	250 minutes total	350 minutes total
Week 12	250 minutes total	300 minutes total	400 minutes total

Need help getting started?

Here are some simple things to help you get going:

- ❖ Choose fitness activities that fit your personality and that you enjoy.
- ❖ Make exercise a family activity.
- ❖ View your plan/resolution as a lifestyle change.
- ❖ Start new plans slowly, but remain consistent and continue building on them.
- ❖ Find a support system. Find like-minded friends or seek out the help of a professional personal trainer or dietician.
- ❖ Don't put off tomorrow what you can do today. Don't allow any other "priority" to get in the way.
- ❖ Write down why you want to exercise (keep this list somewhere visible for motivation) People who explicitly make resolutions are 10 times more likely to attain their goals than people who don't explicitly make resolutions.
- ❖ Take time to celebrate your achievements (avoid food rewards, especially if weight loss is a goal).
- ❖ Eat a wide variety of foods *in moderation* and include more nutritionally dense foods.
- ❖ Improve your hydration through your daily water intake. Try to consume approximately 64 ounces of water per day.
- ❖ Add in one extra vegetable a day until you are eating 5 servings of vegetables every day.
- ❖ Include one serving of lean protein at every meal.
- ❖ Limit starches and sweets (simple carbohydrates).

Sample exercise fitness program:

Week 1: Walk for 20- 30 minutes just 2 times per week.

Week 2: Increase your walking frequency to 3 times per week. Add in one day of strength training. Try 5-10 exercises to target your entire body.

Weeks 3-4: Maintain the three days of walking and increase the strength training to two times per week.

Weeks 5-6: Increase the intensity of your walk sessions by increasing the speed and/or increasing the incline. If possible, walk four times per week and strength train 3 times per week.

Weeks 7-8: Time to change things up to keep your body challenged and avoid plateaus and burnout. Try adding a different cardio option at least two times per week (swimming, jogging, playing a sport, etc.). For the strength training, try new techniques like pyramids or supersets. You may need to enlist the help of a personal trainer for new ideas.

TRAINING ZONES

Healthy Heart Zone - 50 - 60% of maximum heart rate: The easiest zone and probably the best zone for people just starting a fitness program. It can also be used as a warm up for more serious walkers. This zone has been shown to help decrease body fat, blood pressure and cholesterol. It also decreases the risk of degenerative diseases and has a low risk of injury.

Fitness Zone - 60 - 70% of maximum heart rate: This zone provides the same benefits as the healthy heart zone, but is more intense and burns more total calories.

Endurance Zone - 70 - 80% of maximum heart rate: This zone will improve your cardiovascular and respiratory system AND increase the strength of your heart. This is the preferred zone if you are training for an endurance event.

Performance Zone - 80 - 90% of maximum heart rate: Benefits of this zone include an improved VO2 maximum (the highest amount of oxygen one can consume during exercise) and thus an improved cardiorespiratory system, and a higher lactate tolerance ability which means your endurance will improve and you'll be able to fight fatigue better.

Maximum Effort Zone - 90 - 100% of maximum heart rate: Although this zone burns the highest number of calories, it is very intense. Most people can only stay in this zone for short periods. You should only train in this zone if you are in very good shape and have been cleared by a physician.

Finding Your Target Heart Rate

Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) = 220-age in years

Resting Heart Rate (RHR) = calculated after 20 minutes of sitting or resting

Heart Rate Reserve (HRR) = MHR – RHR

-Target heart rate is measured by **Training Intensity (TI)** zones. To improve the cardiorespiratory system, a training intensity between **60-85%** is recommended.

$$\text{TI 60\%} = (\text{HRR} \times 0.60) + \text{RHR}$$

$$\text{TI 85\%} = (\text{HRR} \times 0.85) + \text{RHR}$$

Example:

$$\text{MHR} = 220 - 19 = 201$$

$$\text{RHR} = 78 \text{ bpm}$$

$$\text{HRR} = 201 - 78 = 123$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{TI 60\%} &= (123 \times 0.60) + 78 \\ &= 73.8 + 78 \\ &= 151.8 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{TI 85\%} &= (123 \times 0.85) + 78 \\ &= 104.55 + 78 \\ &= 182.55 \end{aligned}$$

-Heart rate is recorded as (beats per minute) bpm

Therefore, target heart rate zone for 60-85% = 152-183 bpm.
