



Guidelines for Walking

Beginning a walking program is a good way to add physical activity into your day and to meet cardiovascular endurance guidelines. Walking is great because it can be done anywhere, anytime and with little equipment. It replicates an activity that you perform daily, therefore conditioning your heart and muscles very functionally.

Getting Started

The key to a regular walking program is to schedule time into your day to walk. This time can be planned in one chunk of 20-60 minutes at a time or in several chunks of 10-minute increments. Other keys to continued motivation and success include:

- Find a time that fits into your life
- Include companionship
- Have a variety of routines
- Plan for unfavorable weather
- Invest in shoes that support your feet, knees and hips
- ENJOY IT— pay attention to nature, take time alone, or engage in conversation depending on your needs in any particular day

Proper Walking Posture

Using good posture while walking is essential to ensure safety and program longevity. Follow the tips below for proper walking posture:

- Stand tall and imagine a rope pulling the crown of your head up towards the sky
- Relax your shoulders down and away from your ears as your finger tips gently reach towards the ground
- Line the ears up directly above shoulders
- Move arms freely
- Relax hands — to release tension, hold thumb to pointer finger together
- Keep head up with chin level as you gaze ahead, not at the ground

Proper Walking Form

Upper Body

- Hold your chest high and your shoulders back, down and relaxed.
- Bend arms to slightly less than 90 degrees with hands cupped gently.
- Pump arms front to back, not side to side.
- Do not swing elbows higher than your breast bone.
- Pumping arms faster will encourage feet to move faster.

Lower Body

- Pretend you are walking on a straight line with one foot placed directly in front of the other.
- Resist the urge to elongate your steps. To go faster, take smaller faster steps.
- Push off with toes and concentrate on landing on your heel. Roll through the step and use the natural spring of your calf muscles to propel you forward.
- Tighten abs by pulling your belly button to the spine.
- Tuck in your behind and rotate your hips forward slightly. This will keep you from arching your back.

Breathing

- Breathe naturally taking deep rhythmic breaths to get the maximum amount of oxygen into your system. You should always be able to hold a conversation with someone without too labored of breath.