



Walking for Your Health

One of the simplest exercises to help you stay active and improve health is walking. Research shows aerobic activity can help in managing a healthy body weight and lowers the risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure. It also helps reduce stress, strengthen muscles, and boost your immunity. Federal guidelines advocate adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity—like walking—each week. Whether around your neighborhood, at a park, or a path near work, safely start walking with these tips:

- ✔ Try walking daily starting with 10 to 15 minutes and increasing length over time
- ✔ Wear properly fitting comfortable shoes with a sturdy heel to protect your feet, legs, and back from injury
- ✔ Dress in comfortable, loose-fitting clothes made from breathable materials; wear bright colors or reflective tape on early mornings or at night so motorists can see you
- ✔ Warm up muscles by walking slowly for three to five minutes before hitting a faster pace
- ✔ Carry a bottle of water and stay hydrated during the walk
- ✔ Cool down by building in five minutes of slow strolling after a faster-paced walk to gradually reduce heart and muscle stress

If you have a chronic condition, such as heart disease or diabetes, check with your healthcare provider before beginning a new fitness routine.

Sources include the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, American Heart Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Krames, and the National Institutes of Health.

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