



**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF IN-  
TEREST:**

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# Hats ON for Safety

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## Ready, Set, Walk

At last, Spring is here, the flowers are in bloom and the time has come to get outside.

What a great time to WALK!

**Start Walking** More than 50% of Americans are overweight or obese, conditions that contribute to the risk of chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and coronary artery disease. Good news! We can do something to put physical activity into our days...start with a walk



around the block.

Walking is the gold standard of exercises, since it uses nearly 200 muscles and is a safe, inexpensive, and fun activity almost anyone can do.

### How Much Walking

**Should I Do?** The Surgeon General recommends 30 minutes or more of accumulated moderate intensity physical activity on five or more days per week to improve health and fitness. "Accumulated" means you can do it in shorter bouts throughout the day (for example, 10—15 minute intervals throughout the day) and "moderate intensity" means you feel warm and slightly out of breath when you do it.

- Park your car farther from the store.
- Take a walk at lunch.
- Walk for errands instead of driving.
- Get rid of your riding lawn mower.
- Keep your walking shoes handy. Leave a pair at your office for quick 10 minute stress reducing walks.

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends 20-60 minutes of continuous activity three to five times a week, at 60% -90% of maximum-heart rate. If weight loss is your goal, you may need to walk at least 60 minutes a day.

If you are just starting you might begin slowly with a 10—15 minute walk three times a week and increase weekly.

### Before You Go...

- Wear loose, light-weight clothing that is appropriate for the weather.
- Take along a water bottle
- Choose cushioned

socks

- Select light, flexible, well fitting shoes that provide good support and have lots of cushioning.

- Wear sunscreen

- Walk with an ID

- Carry a cell phone
- Choose a safe, pleasant place to walk.



## Top Reasons to Walk

- Walking prevents type 2 diabetes
- Walking strengthens your heart
  - Walking is good for your brain.
  - Walking is good for your bones
  - Walking helps alleviate symptoms of depression
  - Walking reduces the risk of breast and colon cancer
- Walking improves fitness
- Walking in short bouts improves fitness, too.
- Walking improves physical function



## Good Average Walking Speed

- A good average walking speed is 3 to 4 miles per hour and depends on your leg length and how quickly you can move your legs.
- You may need to start at a slower pace if you're out of shape, but you will build up quickly if you walk regularly.
- Treadmill and outdoor walking yield the same benefits, Set the elevation to 1% to mimic outdoor walking.



What are \*YOU\* worried about? Let us know safety topics that could help keep your workplace safe!

## Safety Tips for Walkers

- ▶ Remain alert to your surroundings (headphones may seriously limit your awareness of situations around you, so leave them at home, or keep the sound low.)
- ▶ Carry a flashlight or use reflective strips on your clothing if your walk starts or finishes in the dusk or dark.
- ▶ Choose a safe, pleasant place to walk.
- ▶ If possible walk with a friend or group. This is for motivation as well as protection.
- ▶ Let someone know when you'll be back.

## Walking-the Perfect Exercise

It is easy to begin walking. Put on your walking shoes and you're off. There are no membership fees, expensive equipment or lessons.

You can walk almost anywhere, year around and at your own pace. You will notice that a few minutes into your walk, you will forget about the problems of the day, the tension evaporates and your pace will quicken.

I did not write the above, but I could have. Years ago when I had just gotten divorced and re-entered the work force I started to walk for an hour before I went home. This served several purposes-traffic was a lot better driving home, I got the "work day" out of my system before

I went home to be a mom, and it gave me "me time." Walking works!

Walking provides the same cardiovascular benefits as running and burns nearly the same number of calories. Consistent walking can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol, prevent heart attacks and strokes, strengthen bones and tone flabby muscles.



It's relaxing and at the same time invigorating. 70 million Americans think walking is the perfect exercise, too.



*Some information in this newsletter was taken from Medicinenet.com; personalmd.com; "Walk Your Way to Fitness"*