

STEP IT UP!

EVERYONE CAN HELP
MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES
MORE WALKABLE

WORKSITES:

Implement workplace policies and programs to promote walking.

MEDIA:

Spread the word about walking and creating safe and easy places to walk.

PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AND FITNESS FACILITIES:

Provide access to green spaces and recreation areas.

SCHOOLS:

Implement safe routes to school and daily physical education programs.

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES:

Walk with friends, family, and work colleagues.

TRANSPORTATION, LAND USE, & COMMUNITY DESIGNERS:

Design safe and easy places to walk.

PUBLIC HEALTH:

Provide information to plan, implement, and evaluate walking programs.

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS:

Talk to patients about physical activity.

VOLUNTEER & NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS:

Offer free or low-cost community walking programs.



Step it up! Help make your community more walkable. Learn how by visiting www.SurgeonGeneral.gov

Walking for Health

It's easy! It doesn't cost a thing. It's safe. It's good for you. And it's fun—especially if you walk with a friend.

Walk anywhere that is easy, close, and safe for you. Plan where you will walk before you go. Think of flat areas where you can walk, such as shopping malls, school tracks, or streets near your home. Pick a time and a place that work for you. Plan to walk with someone. If you can't, be sure someone knows when and where you are walking.

When should I not walk?

- Do not walk if you are not feeling well (if, for example, you have a cold or if you have a fever). Wait for 24 hours after your temperature has returned to normal before increasing your activity.
- Do not walk outdoors if the weather is too hot or too cold. Find an indoor place to walk (such as a shopping mall) when the weather is not good.
- Do not walk right after you eat a meal. Your heart is busy pumping blood needed to digest your meal. Wait at least one hour after eating before you go walking.

If you miss more than three days of walking, decrease your time and begin again slowly. This is a plan for life, so don't worry too much about "catching up."

What do I wear? Wear loose-fitting clothes. If you have comfortable shoes that fit well, wear them. Well-cushioned shoes, such as oxfords or athletic shoes, work well. Wear socks to give a little more cushion and to help prevent blisters.

What else do I need to know? Your doctor or cardiac rehab staff will tell you if you need special instructions, such as how to check your heart rate, or other information that will help you be more active.

Start a Walking Program

Walking does wonders in helping to reduce the harmful effects of high blood pressure. But you have to leave time in your busy schedule to follow a walking program that will work for you. In planning your walking program, keep the following points in mind:

- Choose a safe place to walk. Find a partner or group of people to walk with you. Your walking partner(s) should be able to walk with you on the same schedule and at the same speed.
- Wear shoes with thick flexible soles that will cushion your feet and absorb shock.
- Wear clothes that will keep you dry and comfortable. Look for synthetic fabrics that absorb sweat and remove it from your skin.
- For extra warmth in winter, wear a knit cap. To stay cool in summer, wear a baseball cap or visor.
- Do light stretching before and after you walk.
- Think of your walk in three parts. Walk slowly for 5 minutes. Increase your speed for the next 5 minutes. Finally, to cool down, walk slowly again for 5 minutes.
- Try to walk at least three times per week. Add 2 to 3 minutes per week to the fast walk. If you walk less than three times per week, increase the fast walk more slowly.
- To avoid stiff or sore muscles or joints, start gradually. Over several weeks, begin walking faster, going further, and walking for longer periods of time.

The more you walk, the better you will feel. You also will use more calories.

Sample Walking Program

Week	Comfortable Walking	Times A Day
1	5 minutes	3
2	7 minutes	3
3	10 minutes	2
4	12 minutes	2
5	13 minutes	2
6	15 minutes	2

When you are comfortable walking 15 minutes twice a day, you may want to talk with your health care provider about increasing your activity.

You should be able to walk and talk at the same time. If you can't talk because you are gasping for air, you are walking too fast. If you can talk as easy while walking as when you are still, then you should try walking a little faster. **Good Luck and Keep Moving!**