



The wonders of walking for wellness



Walking does more than help us get from one place to another. It also helps keep us healthy — physically and mentally. Two of the best benefits of walking for fitness are that you don't need to be athletic, and it's free. All you need are comfortable clothes and sneakers.

10 reasons why you should walk more. Walking can:

1. Boost your energy.
2. Burn calories.
3. Fill your body with feel-good hormones.
4. Improve sleep.
5. Keep your heart strong.
6. Lower the risk of disease.
7. Melt away stress.
8. Strengthen muscles and bones.
9. Support the immune system.
10. Tone your legs.

Getting started

When you're first starting out, it helps both physically and mentally to break your walks into smaller ones. Shorter walks are also a good way to fit exercise into a busy schedule.

Aim for 150 minutes of exercise a week. Start with 10–15 minutes once or twice a day, then slowly increase your time and distance.

Staying motivated

The beauty of walking is that there are so many ways and places you can do it. You can follow the same routine every day or mix it up. To keep boredom at bay:

- Chat on the phone.
- Listen to a podcast or audiobook.
- Look for trees, flowers, or animals along the way.
- Meet up with a friend.
- Savor the silence.
- Snap photos and post what you see on social media.
- Try going in the opposite direction.
- Vary your pace, from medium to brisk.



Sneaking in more steps

Hitting 10,000 steps can seem overwhelming, even if you're already fit or have loads of free time. Whether you're walking for weight loss or more energy, here are ways to sneak extra steps into your day:

- Park farther away.
- Take your dog or a neighbor's dog for a walk.
- Take the stairs.
- Walk every time you talk on the phone.

At work, you can:

- Have walking meetings.
- Use the restroom or break room furthest from your work station.
- Schedule a walking workout with a friend.
- Walk over to your co-worker to ask a question.

If you're busy raising kids:

- Sneak in a walk around the block after the bus comes.
- Take a family walk after dinner.
- Walk around the field or court at sports practice.
- Walk in place while you cook, wash dishes, or fold laundry.

Once you start putting one foot in front of the other for exercise, soon you'll be walking your way to better physical and mental health.



For extra motivation or guidance,
try the Walk Your Way to Wellness Action Plan on
our SydneySM Health mobile app or **anthem.com**.

Sources:

American Diabetes Association: *The Benefits of Walking (and Solutions!)* (accessed May 2023); diabetes.org.
Prevention: *12 Major Benefits of Walking, According to Experts* (accessed May 2023); prevention.com.
The Heart Foundation: *The Top 10 Excuses for Not Exercising* (accessed May 2023); theheartfoundation.org.

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