

# HEALTHY LIVING



## Walking: One Step at a Time

While some fitness enthusiasts relentlessly seek out the latest exercise trends, others—especially those who are spending more recreational time outdoors—are returning to good, old-fashioned walking to help them feel great and get into shape. Whether enjoying the wonder of nature or the company of a friend, walking can be a healthy, invigorating experience.

Thanks to its convenience and simplicity, walking just might be right for you, too. And except for a good pair of walking shoes, it requires virtually no equipment. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that a sedentary lifestyle has a debilitating effect on our health as we age, therefore physical activity is imperative. According to CDC, walking accomplishes all of the following and more:

- Improves cardiovascular endurance
- Tones muscles in the lower body
- Burns calories
- Reduces risk of heart disease
- Reduces anxiety and enhances sleep

### Selecting Shoes

Too many people choose fashion over function when purchasing running shoes, not realizing that ill-fitting shoes can do more than hurt their stride; they can also lead to pain throughout the body.

- Make sure the shoes you purchase fit properly. The balls of your feet should rest exactly at the point where the toe end of the shoe bends during walking.
- Shop for sneakers at the end of the day or after a workout when your feet are generally at their largest.
- Wear the type of socks you usually wear during exercise. When trying on shoes, be sure to wear them for at least 10 minutes at the store.

Once you have purchased a pair of shoes, don't walk them into the ground. While estimates vary as to when the best time to replace old shoes is, podiatric experts suggest between 350 and 500 miles is a good benchmark.

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## Getting Started

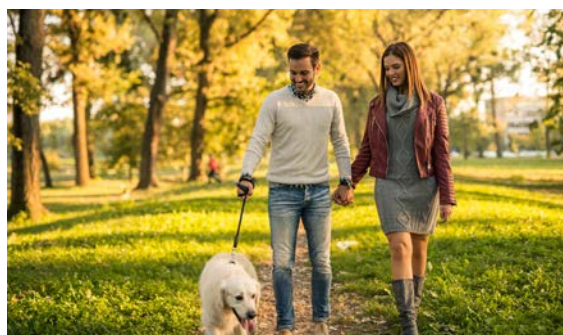
CDC recommends adults get 150 minutes per week of moderate physical activity (or 75 minutes of vigorous activity), and walking is a great option. The following tips can help you get started on your walking regimen:

- Move your arms freely, in coordination with the opposite leg.
- Don't stoop your head or look down as you walk. This will challenge the normal forward curve of your neck, which, in turn, will cause you to carry your weight improperly.
- Don't carry weights or dumbbells while walking. They're better used as a separate part of your exercise regimen.
- Expect a little soreness in the thighs and calves for the first week or two. If you experience more than soreness, consult your doctor of chiropractic.
- Walk briskly, with "purpose." Simply sauntering, while relaxing, is not an effective form of cardiovascular exercise.
- Stay hydrated.

## Walking Surfaces

The following tips can help you get started on your walking regimen:

- Walking on a cushioned or rubberized track is generally better because the cushioning of this type of track absorbs most of the impact of your walking. Many recreation centers offer this type of track free of charge.
- Grass is another good surface, but watch out for hidden dips or holes in the ground.
- Walking on a surface with no give, such as concrete or a mall floor, is not your best choice, because this type of surface will not absorb much of the impact your body will experience. If you do choose to walk on such a surface, be sure to select adequately cushioned shoes.
- Alternate the days that you walk at a slant. For example, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, walk on slanted terrain. On Tuesday and Thursday, switch to flat terrain. This keeps your spine symmetrical.



## Pain and Injury

While you may experience pain or injury in a particular area (such as a knee or a hip), the root of the problem may lie elsewhere. A problem in the foot or ankle can create an imbalance in every step, leading to discomfort or injury that moves to the knees, hips, low back or other regions of the body.

If you suffer from pain beyond typical muscle soreness, your doctor of chiropractic can diagnose and treat your pain or injury and get you back on track. Your chiropractor can also customize a wellness program that is right for you and has the expertise to help keep you feeling and functioning your best.

**For more information on prevention and wellness, or to find an ACA chiropractor near you, visit [www.HandsDownBetter.org](http://www.HandsDownBetter.org)**

Additional Resources:

- "Physical Activity," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed Sept. 17, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/index.html>.
- "Walking? Why Not?" Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed Sept. 17, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/walking/>.
- "Walking: Trim your waistline, improve your health," Mayo Clinic, accessed Oct. 2, 2020. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/walking/art-20046261>.
- Jonathan Beverly, "Gear up with the right running shoes," Runner's World, accessed Oct. 2, 2020. <https://www.runnersworld.com/gear/a20842305/how-to-buy-the-right-running-shoes/>.
- "The Right Time to Replace Your Shoes," American Academy of Podiatric Medicine. <http://www.aapm.org/replace-shoes.html>. Accessed Oct. 2, 2020.



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