

# fitness walking

The easiest activity you can do is walking - and it gets you healthy, too!

Whether you walk with a friend, a personal trainer, a walking class or it's a supplement to another workout, walking is a great low-impact workout.

Walking helps burn body fat, recharges your mind, strengthens your bones, helps to fight bone density loss due to osteoporosis and it can also reduce stress.

If you include hills on your walks, you will increase the workload and the calories you burn.

For maximum impact and benefit from your walking, you should aim to take 10,000 steps a day. These steps will be made up from your fitness walking and your everyday walking too. A pedometer is a great way to measure the number of steps you take.

## walk this way

"Fitness walking" is a fast-paced walk of sufficient duration to produce beneficial cardiovascular changes in the body. Simply, you have to walk fast enough and long enough to make it work!

Proper posture is important:

- ◆ Hold your head in a neutral position, your chin neither too high nor too low;
- ◆ Look straight ahead and keep your shoulders back and relaxed;
- ◆ Lift your chest;
- ◆ Swing your arms comfortably with your legs;
- ◆ Land on the heel first followed by rolling onto the ball of the foot and finishing with a strong push off the toes; and
- ◆ Keep your feet and knees pointing straight ahead.

When walking up and down hills, bend your knees slightly to reduce stress on the knee joints.

## a change of pace

Your goal is to walk at a brisk pace for 30 to 40 minutes per workout. Start slowly - a gradual increase in intensity and duration helps to ensure long term success and reduce the risk of injury.

To increase your pace, simply increase the speed of the arm swing. The leg action will naturally follow the cadence of the arms.

To stay motivated, look at changing your walking route. Not only will this be more interesting but the variety will produce greater benefits for the body.

Walking for fitness is about as simply as physical activity gets; all it takes is putting one foot in front of the other!

## further information:

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