

American Podiatric Medical Association

2009 Walking Guide

It is recommended that adults participate in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. Walking has the lowest impact on bones and joints.

Benefits of walking include:

- Reduced risk of coronary heart disease. Improved blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and blood lipid profile

Women in the Nurses Health Study (72,488 female nurses) who walked at least three hours per week reduced their risk of heart attack and other coronary illnesses by 35% compared to those who did not walk.

- Maintain body weight and lower risk of obesity

Walking at a moderate pace for 30-60 minutes burns stored fat and can build muscle to speed up your metabolism.

- Reduced risk of osteoporosis

Walking is effective in decreasing the rate of bone loss in the legs.

- Reduced risk of breast and colon cancer

Women who walked briskly at least two hours weekly decreased their breast cancer risk by 18%. Routine walking can also help to prevent colon cancer and improve the quality of life of colon cancer survivors.



- Reduced risk of non-insulin dependent diabetes (Type 2)

The Diabetes Prevention Program showed that walking 150 minutes per week and losing 7% of your body weight can reduce your risk of diabetes by 58%.

- Enhanced mental well-being

Research has shown, by measurement of a standard depression questionnaire, that depression is lowered 47% in those moderately physically active for 30 minutes, three to five times a week, after 12 weeks.

As we age we need more exercise. Physical activity helps to prevent bone loss, increase muscle strength, and reduce the risk of several other diseases associated with aging. Being physically active is key in maintaining quality of life and independence. Walking improves fitness, physical function, and prevents physical disability for aging adults. For older adults moderate activity can come from longer sessions of walking or swimming, shorter sessions of vigorous walking or stair climbing.

Walking is one of the least expensive and easiest ways to stay fit. Walking is very versatile, allowing you to complete this activity indoors or outdoors as well as regulate the intensity. Here are a few tips to help you be safe and get the most out of your workout.

Getting Started	Walking Safety Tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before beginning your walking program, check with your doctor. If you have a medical condition or have had a recent injury it is best to check with your doctor first to prevent problems. Preexisting conditions will not necessarily prevent you from walking, as routine walking can help prevent disease progression and other disease symptoms. 2. Invest in good shoes. Shoes are the only expense that you will incur, so invest in a good quality walking shoe or running shoe. Shoes should fit when tried on without any pinching or pressure and your APMA member podiatrist can help you with proper fit. Shoes recommended by your podiatrist and that have the APMA Seal of Acceptance are highly suggested. 3. Warm up. Stretching before your exercise is always a great idea because it warms up your muscles. Begin your exercise slowly, gradually increasing time and intensity, which gives your body time to adjust. 4. Monitor your heart rate and breathing. Walk at a pace that is comfortable yet challenging to you. Do not overexert yourself. Stop and rest if you do not feel well. 5. Get a pedometer. Using a pedometer is a great way to track your steps and monitor your progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor your level of fatigue, heart rate, and physical discomfort. • Beware of warning signs and signals of a heart attack, such as chest and arm pain, dizziness, and lightheadedness. • Use the appropriate equipment and clothes for the activity. • Take 3-5 minutes before the activity to stretch and warm up your muscles. As you near the end of the activity, decrease the activity in order to properly cool down. • Begin your activity at an easy pace while increasing time and distance gradually. • Drink plenty of water, at least eight to ten 8 oz. cups of water per day to replace lost fluids.

Recommendations from Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans			
Population Group	Key Guidelines— Aerobic Activity	Other Activity Guidelines	Comments
Children and Adolescents	60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous activity.	Include muscle and bone strengthening three days per week.	Activities should be age-appropriate, enjoyable, varied.
Adults	150 minutes per week of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity.	Include muscle strengthening two days per week; spread activity over week.	For additional health benefits, increase to 300 moderate activity minutes weekly.
Older Adults	150 minutes per week or as physically active as abilities and conditions allow.	Include exercise to improve balance if at risk of falling.	Additional benefits are better cognitive functioning, increased bone density, lower risk of hip fracture.
Adults with Diabetes	As able, 150 minutes per week of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity.	As able, include muscle strengthening two days per week.	Avoid inactivity. Consult health care provider about appropriate amount and type of activity.
Pregnant Women	150 minutes per week of moderate activity if not already active, preferably spread activity over week.	If already habitually engaged in vigorous physical activity, can continue as advised by health care provider.	Also applies for postpartum period.
People with Chronic Conditions	Consult health care provider for appropriate types and amounts.	Follow provider recommendations to obtain important health benefits.	Understand how chronic conditions affect safety of physical activity.