



1 Week of Walking

for a Healthier You

When it comes to choosing a fitness activity, walking is one of the best exercises you can do. Not only does it improve cardiovascular fitness and help balance cholesterol levels and blood pressure, it also increases bone strength and muscle mass—all while helping you lose weight and lowering your risk of developing chronic diseases. But most importantly, it's fun, inexpensive, and convenient.

- Marnie Dominy, Marnie Dominy, MS, Exercise Physiologist
www.choosingyourhealthypath.com

QualityHealth®

Getting Started

These walking workouts can be done on a treadmill, on an indoor or outdoor track, or in your neighborhood and can be adjusted for all fitness levels (beginner to advanced). Because we use the ease at which you can converse to gauge exertion, having a partner is recommended, but if you don't have one, you can gauge your exertion by talking softly to yourself—or even using your cell phone to call a friend!

What You'll Need

- Walking Shoes
- Pedometer that measures steps and distance (2,000 steps = 1 mile)
- A Stop Watch or Timer



Essential Terms

- Aerobic zone = breathing hard but can converse
- High intensity = breathing so hard you cannot converse
- Recovery zone = slowing your pace back to normal
- Warm up = 5 minutes of easy walking followed by light stretches
- Cool down = allowing your cardiovascular system to return to normal. Walk lightly in circles or back and forth until you can comfortably talk with your partner (or to yourself).

Stretches

Hamstring Stretch *(back of thighs)*

Standing with your feet 6 inches apart, knees slightly bent, lean forward to touch your toes. Hold this stretch for 20 to 30 seconds.



Quad Stretch *(front of thighs)*

Find a stable object to hold onto for balance. With your left hand, reach back and grab your left ankle. Stand tall and do not hyperextend your back. Pull your left heel back toward your left buttocks. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds; repeat on the other side.



Side Stretch

Standing with feet shoulder width apart, stretch your right arm directly above your head. Lean toward the left, stretching your right side. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds; repeat on the other side.



Stretches

Calf Stretch

Lunge forward with your right foot, knee bent. Make sure your right knee is directly above your right shoelace. Your left leg should be straight behind you with the heel pressed down toward the ground. Hold the stretch for 20 to 30 seconds; switch legs.



Ankle Circles

Holding onto a stationary object for balance, stand on your left leg while you rotate your right foot in a circular clockwise pattern. Move slowly! Reverse direction. Do 4 to 6 circles in each direction and repeat with your left ankle.



Plan, set goals, and keep a record of your success by recording the time, speed, and steps of your walks in a daily journal

Day 1

The Short Distance Walk

The Short Distance Aerobic Walk is a great walk to start the week. It will get you going on your walking schedule and rev up your system. Your goal is 4,000 steps or 2 miles.

- After warming up, start your walk. Five minutes into the walk, your breathing should pick up. You can easily talk to your walking partner but it should be breathy. You are in your aerobic zone.
- Continue at this pace for as long as you can. If you are just beginning your program, go for 10 to 15 minutes instead of 30. Your breathing will be the same as outlined above but your steps will not.

Whether you make it 500 steps or 1,000, that's OK. You are walking, you've started your program, and you're moving forward!

Cool down and stretch.



Day 2

The Interval Walk

The Interval Walk aims to increase your aerobic capacity by pushing your cardiovascular system. During your walk, you'll increase your breathing for short bursts, then take it back to an aerobic zone. Plan a route that will take you away from your starting point for about 15 to 20 minutes at a point where you can turn and come back to the starting point. This is a hard workout, but you'll love it!

- After warming up, start your walk. Five minutes into the walk, your breathing should have increased to your aerobic zone. You should still be able to comfortably talk to your partner but will be a bit breathy.

- Using a pedometer:
 - Walk 1,000 steps – aerobic zone
 - Walk 500 steps – high intensity
 - Walk another 1,000 steps – aerobic zone
 - Walk 250 steps – high intensity
 - Walk 1,000 steps – aerobic zone
 - Walk 150 steps – high intensity
 - Walk another 1,500 steps – aerobic zone
 - Walk the rest of the way - recovery zone

Beginners may cut the steps in each interval in half to start, working up to the above routine.

Cool down and stretch.



Day 3

The Long Distance Aerobic Walk

The Long Distance Aerobic Walk is a great fat-burning workout. The object is to keep your breathing in your aerobic zone for the full hour. You will burn both glucose and fat, but predominantly fat. Based on a 15-minute mile pace, plan a 4 mile, fairly flat route. At 2,000 steps a mile, you will log 8,000 to 10,000 steps!

- After warming up, start your walk. Five minutes into the walk, aim to be in your aerobic zone. You will be able to carry on a conversation with your walking partner for the full workout, though it will be breathy.
- Keep going at the same pace for the next 55 minutes, then slow down to your recovery zone.

Adjust this walk for your fitness level.

If you are a beginner, you may walk 1 mile or 15 minutes. Just get out there!

Cool down and stretch.

Day 4

The Hill Walk

This walk is meant to be short and intense. Walking up and down hills will strengthen your thighs and buttocks, increasing your lean muscle mass.

- Find a route with a .2 to .4 mile hill. The steepness of the hill depends on your fitness level.
- Warm up for 5 minutes—you will now be in your aerobic zone. Walk up the hill as fast as you can, without feeling uncomfortable.
- Once you reach the top, recover by either walking around in small circles or back and forth. Walk back down the hill.
- Repeat this exercise. The number of times you tackle the hill will depend on your fitness level.

Walking down a steep hill is sometimes hard on knees, so take the downhill at any speed you feel works for you.

Adjust the workout for your fitness level.

If you are a beginner, you may only want to do the hill once or twice on this day.

You may find an easier hill to start with or a shorter hill.

Cool down and stretch.

Day 5

Mix It Up

The Mix It Up Walk is great for a fun change. Just like the hill walk, it utilizes different muscle groups. Using different muscle not only builds more muscle mass, it helps decrease overuse injury.

Depending on your time availability and fitness level, you may choose to do this walk for 20 or 45 minutes. The longer you walk however, the more fat you'll burn and the faster you will increase your cardiovascular fitness. During your Mix It Up walk, you'll be walking forward, backward, side right lead, and side left lead. You'll be using muscles you didn't know you had.

- Warm up for 5 minutes—you will now be in your aerobic zone.
- After 10 minutes in this zone, turn to face your partner and walk sideways for 2 to 5 minutes. Your pace will decrease significantly.
- Resume walking forward for 5 minutes at your aerobic pace
- Turn and walk sideways with the other side leading for another 2 to 5 minutes.
- Resume walking forward for 5 minutes.
- Turn and walk backward for 2 to 5 minutes.
- Resume walking forward for 5 minutes.
- Depending on your fatigue, you can repeat this cycle several times.

Again, if you are just beginning the workout program, adjust your time. Do the workout above but cut the time for each segment.

Cool down and stretch.



Day 6

The High Intensity Walk

The High Intensity Walk is a short walk, but you'll be working hard throughout the entire thing, while breathing in your high intensity zone.

- Map out a flat route, a hilly route or a combination of the two.
- After warming up, walk for 5 minutes in your aerobic zone.
- Now pick up the pace and move! Really pump it. If you are walking with a partner, encourage each other. Save your conversation for after the workout over a bottle of water.
- Keep up this pace for 15 to 25 minutes (including the warm up).

Beginners, take it easy on this one. Yes, go ahead and do a hard walk, but increase your breathing just above your aerobic zone. Push yourself a little harder than usual. You know what that is. You might also want to take some intermittent rests for your heart to recover.

Cool down and stretch.

Day 7

The Circuit Walk

The Circuit Walk is a fun way to end your walk-week. You'll be doing a combination of walking and calisthenics, which are a great synergistic activity to complement the walk.

- Find a loop, either around a city block, a high school track, or a park, that is approximately a quarter mile.
 - Warm up and walk one loop. Then follow the instructions below:
 - Stop and do 32 squats
Walk briskly one loop
 - Stop and do 32 jumping jacks
Walk briskly one loop
 - Stop and do 32 knee lifts
Walk briskly one loop
 - Stop and do 32 side knee lifts
Walk briskly one loop
 - Stop and reach both hands to the sky 32 times
Walk briskly one loop
 - Stop and do 50 crunches
Walk briskly one loop
 - Stop and circle arms in large circles to the side 32 times
Walk slowly to cool down one loop
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Beginners may want to start with shorter loops and cut the callisthenic repetitions to 16 each, slowly working up to the above workout.

Stretch.