

Smart Choices

A Community Nutrition Education Program



Eat & Exercise for Health

Walking

Walking briskly can be a great exercise. It doesn't require special facilities or equipment other than sturdy, properly fitting shoes with cushioned soles and arch supports that help protect the ankle and knee joints. You don't have to worry too much about injuries, and walking can fit into almost any schedule.



Sample Walking Program

If a particular week's schedule is overly tiring, repeat it for another week before going on to the next level. Do at least three exercise sessions each week. You do not have to complete the walking program in 12 weeks.

	Warm Up	Walk Briskly	Cool Down	Total Time
Week 1	5 min	5 min	5 min	15 min
Week 2	5 min	7 minutes	5 min	17 min
Week 3	5 min	9 minutes	5 min	19 min
Week 4	5 min	11 minutes	5 min	21 min
Week 5	5 min	13 minutes	5 min	23 min
Week 6	5 min	15 minutes	5 min	25 min
Week 7	5 min	18 minutes	5 min	28 min
Week 8	5 min	20 minutes	5 min	30 min
Week 9	5 min	23 minutes	5 min	33 min
Week 10	5 min	26 minutes	5 min	36 min
Week 11	5 min	28 minutes	5 min	38 min
Week 12	5 min	30 minutes	5 min	40 min

Week 13 and on:

Check your pulse periodically to see if you are within your target zone. As you get more in shape, try to be within the upper range of your target zone. Gradually increase your brisk walking time to 30 to 60 minutes, three or four times a week. Remember that your goal is to get the benefits you are seeking and enjoy your activity.

Warm-up

A warm-up prepares the body for more intense activity to come and decreases the likelihood of straining or pulling a muscle. The warm-up can start with stretching exercises to loosen muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints. After stretching, exercise moderately for a brief period to prepare the body for more strenuous activity. The more strenuous the activity, the longer and more vigorous the warm-up should be.

Cool Down

Exercise should never end abruptly. Slowing down your exercise activity gradually is as important as warming up. A cool-down helps prevent sudden changes in your cardiovascular system. The cool-down should last 5 to 10 minutes or until your heart rate is within 10 to 20 beats of your pre-exercise heart rate. Stretching as a part of cooling down after vigorous exercise helps prevent your muscles from tightening and minimizes muscle discomfort. It also helps maintain and improve flexibility.

Here's how to check to see if you are within your target heart rate:

1. *Right after you stop moving, take your pulse:* Place the tips of your first two fingers lightly over one of the blood vessels on your neck, just to the left or right of your Adam's apple. Or, try the pulse spot inside your wrist just below the base of your thumb.
2. *Count your pulse for 10 seconds and multiply the number by 6.*
3. *Compare the number to the correct grouping below:* Look for the age grouping that is closest to your age and read the line across. For example, if you are 43, the closest age on the chart is 45; the target zone is 88-131 beats per minute.

Age	Target Heart Rate Zone
20 years	100-150 beats per minute
25 years	98-146 beats per minute
30 years	95-142 beats per minute
35 years	93-138 beats per minute
40 years	90-135 beats per minute
45 years	88-131 beats per minute
50 years	85-127 beats per minute
55 years	83-123 beats per minute
60 years	80-120 beats per minute
65 years	78-116 beats per minute
70 years	75-113 beats per minute

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