



Walk the talk

You don't have to be a great athlete to enjoy the benefits of walking. You just have to do it. Olympic racewalker Debbi Lawrence gives this advice: Begin slowly. Start with a short loop 5 to 10 minutes, turn around and return. Gradually increase the distance as your fitness level improves. Relax. Enjoy the world that surrounds you.

Use a powerful low and controlled arm swing for a more efficient stride. Carry your hands loosely, with palms facing inward and thumbs on top. Keep your thumb and elbow in line, parallel to your waistband, to keep your shoulders low. Keep elbows bent at a 90° angle. As you walk, drive your elbow straight back until the wrist meets the hipbone. Then, as your elbow swings forward, stop slightly in front of the hip. Avoid any side-to-side motion. As you bring your leading arm forward, your opposite leading leg will also swing forward. If you want to increase your pace, take shorter, quicker steps.

Enjoy the benefits of walking

HEALTHFUL. Walking keeps every body tuned up. It stimulates your heartbeat, especially if you move at a brisk pace; it gets your muscles moving; it challenges you to stand up straight and coordinate your movements; it uses your body's own weight to help build and maintain bone density.

CONVENIENT. A walk is always just one step in front of you, anytime, anywhere — indoors, outdoors, alone, with a friend or group (or dog), in the city, country or beach; on flat or hilly terrain; rain or shine.

BETTER THAN A DIET. Walking burns calories and fat while it tones and shapes muscles. Walking can also help you cut down on excessive eating, not only by boosting your metabolism and suppressing appetite (an effect observed by many avid walkers, runners, and other athletes), but also by getting you off the sofa and away from the refrigerator and microwave.

MOOD AND ATTITUDE ENHANCER. Walking helps you clear the cobwebs, shake the blues, recharge your batteries, cool off and calm down. By taking you away from phones, problems, and daily clutter, walking can give you a chance to put things into perspective and come up with new ideas.

GOOD MEDICINE. Hospital professionals know that the sooner patients get up and walk, the sooner and more fully they will recover. Walking can help prevent or relieve many illnesses and injuries, including heart disease, arthritis, obesity, osteoporosis, falls, accidents and fractures.

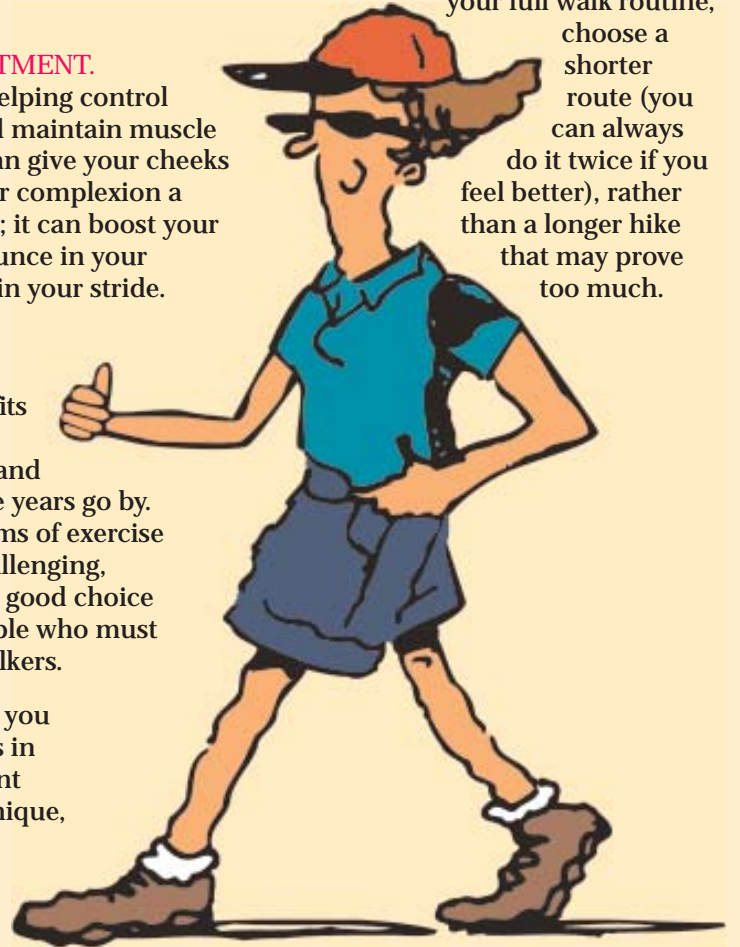
BEAUTY TREATMENT. In addition to helping control your weight and maintain muscle tone, walking can give your cheeks a rosy glow, your complexion a fresh, clear look; it can boost your posture, put bounce in your step, and grace in your stride.

LONG-TERM INVESTMENT. The many benefits of walking can accrue interest and dividends as the years go by. When other forms of exercise become too challenging, walking is still a good choice — even for people who must use canes or walkers.

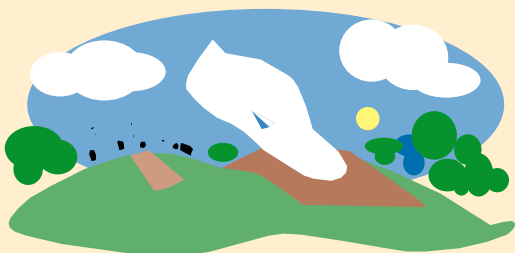
EASY. Although you can take lessons in proper alignment and stride technique, most people already know how to walk.

NO COST. No special equipment or facilities required. While you can go for special walking shoes and suit up in athletic wear, all you really need is comfortable footwear and clothing.

NOTE: If you're not feeling up to your full walk routine, choose a shorter route (you can always do it twice if you feel better), rather than a longer hike that may prove too much.



Daily Constitution



Walking . . . The BEST way to move through life

Walking, basic as it may seem, follows breathing and heartbeat as exercises everyone should include every day. Throughout our lives, we measure progress and competence by the ability to walk — from how soon baby takes those first steps, to how well we recover from setbacks (“He walked away from the accident”) to how long we can keep walking (“At the age of 100, she still walks to the store every day”).

Clearly, walking is more than just a handy means of transportation. Although it's easy to take for granted, people who have found themselves unable to walk recognize that walking is a critical aspect of individual freedom, independence and self-determination.

It's easy to forget that walking is also a wonderful form of exercise. Because most of us do it without thinking, we don't count walking when we tally our sources of daily physical activity, and many of us overlook walking when we look for ways to improve our health and fitness.

For More Information

American Heart Association, see your local affiliate for a booklet called *Walking . . . Natural Fun, Natural Fitness*

Creative Walking, Inc., PO Box 50296, Clayton, MO 63105; (800) 762-9255; for *Walking Off Weight: The Workbook* and other walking resource guides

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 701 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20004

Websites: www.pueblo.gsa.gov (click on health); www.healthfinder.gov

JUST FOR



HEALTH INFORMATION BROCHURE SERIES

A PUBLICATION OF THE **Wellness Councils of America**

AND ITS AFFILIATED WELLNESS COUNCILS

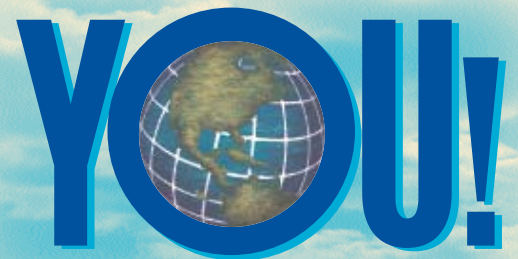
9802 Nicholas Street, Suite 315

Omaha, NE 68114

visit our website: www.welcoa.org

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JUST FOR



HEALTH INFORMATION BROCHURE SERIES

A PUBLICATION OF THE WELLNESS COUNCILS OF AMERICA AND ITS AFFILIATED WELLNESS COUNCILS

Walking for the health of it



It's the simplest, most accessible form of exercise and it may also be the best thing you can do each day to improve and maintain health and well-being throughout life.

No nonsense safety measures ensure your health and security

“WalkSense” is your defense

Safety Checklist

EVEN IF YOU JUST WALK a few blocks...

EVEN IF YOU'RE JUST walking back to your car at the end of the lot...

EVEN IF YOU KNOW you're walking in a safe neighborhood...

Your first step should be regard for your safety. It is important to develop an “automatic sensor” to the hazards of any given environment. You can live in the SAFEST neighborhood — and statistics will STILL say that many accidents occur closest to home. Here are some additional items to consider:

- Wear the right clothing
- Know your route
- Beware of your surroundings
- Be prepared for changes in the weather
- If you feel discomfort, slow down or stop

I can't walk right now... I'm thinking about when I should take my next walk...



YOUR CLOTHES: Wear shoes that fit well and have non-slip soles. Wear clothes that don't chafe or bind. Dress for the weather, with layers to accommodate changing conditions or your own body temperature as you warm up and cool down.



YOUR PATH: Avoid traffic (not only cars, but also bikes, runners, skaters and other obstacles). Stick with sidewalks, paths or quiet streets.



VISIBILITY: Make sure you're visible, especially at twilight or night. Use reflective gear and a flashlight if you walk in the dark.



WATCH YOUR STEP: Look out for uneven surfaces, rocks and litter, cracks, potholes, wet leaves, ice and snow.



PACK LIGHT: Avoid carrying things that could become burdensome or hazardous on your journey. Consider using a backpack to balance your load, or a fanny pack for bare essentials. If you're walking on errands, a wheeled cart or wagon may be a good idea. Don't turn your walk into a strain.



STICK TO SAFE AREAS: Stay away from dangerous or deserted neighborhoods or parks. Consider walking with a companion. Always let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back.



BE PREPARED: Carry some form of identification, a small amount of cash, and other things you may need along the way, such as hat and gloves, rain gear, water, a light snack, a map.



BE ALERT: Keep your eyes open for oncoming cars, unfriendly dogs (or people), thunderstorms and the like. Beware of headphones that could drown out important sounds around you, such as oncoming cars or someone trying to tell you something.



Agony of Da' Feet!

Don't forget the safety of your own feet — ill-fitting shoes, corns, blisters, athlete's foot, arthritis, sprains and broken bones can break down your desire to walk even the shortest distance. See your doctor or podiatrist if you experience any unusual pain or numbness.

A Walk is Closer than You Think

Hmmmm, if I park closer to the store, it'll make me shop faster!

So, now what's YOUR excuse?

I JUST DO NOT HAVE THE TIME! If you don't have time to set aside for walking, consider incorporating walking into your daily activities.

■ Walk instead of ride where you have to go, or stop short of your destination and walk the rest of the way.

■ Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk to your colleagues' offices instead of using the phone or e-mail.

■ Invite friends and family to JOIN YOU on your walk, rather than skipping your walk to JOIN THEM.

BAD WEATHER! Put on your slicker, boots, or long-johns. Or walk indoors — in a mall, on a track or treadmill, around your house.

NEED COMPANY! Ask a friend or join a walking group.

JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE IT! Never push yourself if you really aren't feeling well, and particularly if you have an injury that makes walking painful or difficult. But if you're just feeling lazy, snap out of it and get moving! You'll thank yourself later.

