

# Walking is Good For You!

For overall Cardiovascular Health, the American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity at least 5 days/week. It also notes that “something is always better than nothing”, meaning that you will still receive benefits if you divide your exercise time into 2 or 3 segments of 10 – 15 minutes /day.

## Benefits of a Walking Program:

May lower blood pressure	Promote a healthy heart
Strengthen bones and muscles	Fight depression
Lift your mood	Improve cholesterol levels
Help you burn more calories	Help prevent osteoporosis
Stabilize blood sugar	Improve immune system
Reduce stress	Ease back pain

## How do I start?

### 1. Make a Plan

Where and how far will you walk? How often? Who will you walk with? Consider Safety: choose a safe route where there is good visibility, smooth surfaces, and well populated. Also, let family or friends know your route. When possible walk with a friend: it is safer, more fun, and encourages accountability.

### 2. Get Ready

Make sure you wear shoes designed for walking: proper arch support, a firm heel, and thick flexible soles. Remember, proper footwear prevents injury! Wear clothes that keep you dry and comfortable, wear reflective vest if you intend to run at dusk or pre-dawn.

Remember sun protection: hat or visor, sunglasses, sunscreen

### 3. Go!

Never leave home without: ID, cell phone, emergency money, & water! If wearing headphones, keep volume low so you can hear what is going on around you.

Divide your walk into 3 parts:

- Warm up by walking slowly for 5 – 10 minutes
- Increase your speed to a brisk walk, which means you should raise your heart rate and be able to speak and breath easily. If you can't talk, slow down.
- Cool down by slowing your pace for about 5 minutes until your heart rate gets below 120 beats per minute.

## Stretching

Stretching is Important because it helps reduce the build up of lactic acid, which can lead to muscles cramping and becoming stiff.

- Stretch after your muscles have warmed up: Never stretch cold muscles!
- Do not stretch to the point of pain
- Stretch slowly holding for 15 – 30 seconds. DO NOT BOUNCE.
- Exhale as you stretch, inhale while holding the stretch.