



Walking for Better Health

Walking is the most popular form of exercise in the U.S. for good reason. It's cheap, it's easy, it's fun, and it's good for you. Whether you want to walk to lose weight, stay in shape, or improve your overall health, walking can help. Read on to learn more about the many health benefits and how you can get started on a walking program that's right for you.

Health benefits of walking

When it comes to exercise, walking is a good choice for everyone, young and old. It's something that can be done with children or older family members, and the health benefits are impressive. Studies show that walking can:

- Reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce cholesterol and body fat
- Increase bone density, which helps prevent osteoporosis
- Reduce the risk of some types of cancer
- Help you lose weight
- Improve flexibility and coordination, reducing the risk of falls
- Tone muscles
- Improve sleep and mental well-being
- Reduce stress
- Give you more energy

Starting a walking program

Because of the many health benefits, millions of people getting out and walking. Here are some guidelines to help you get started on your own walking program. Remember, as with any exercise plan, it's important to check with your doctor before you begin. To get started:

- Create a plan that will work with your schedule and lifestyle
- Choose a safe place to walk
- If possible, find someone to walk with you
- Wear shoes with thick, flexible soles that will cushion your feet and absorb shock
- Wear clothes that are right for the season: light cotton in summer, and layers in winter
- Warm up and stretch before you walk to help prevent injury or overexertion; don't forget to cool down, too
- Think of your walk in three parts: walk slowly for 5 minutes, increase your speed for the next 5 minutes, then walk slowly again for 5 minutes to cool down. Gradually increase the amount of time of the faster portion of your walk.
- Try to walk at least three times per week
- Listen to your body; if you experience any symptoms, such as pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, or nausea, stop and take it easy

Make massage an enjoyable part of your wellness plan

Therapeutic massage is an effective and increasingly popular healthcare alternative. Along with a healthy diet, clean water, fresh air, and exercise, massage is an essential element in maintaining good health.

Massage can:

- Reduce blood pressure and stress
- Strengthen the immune system
- Increase circulation
- Alleviate pain
- Promote good posture and alignment
- Speed healing and rehabilitation

Soothe and energize the body, mind, and spirit