Walking...It’s a Good Thing

Enjoy The Benefits Of Walking

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 a 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 109, 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
www.americanheart.org

National Institutes of Health
www.nih.gov

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.

BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska
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Your First Step: SAFETY

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

No nonsense safety measures ensure your health and security

“WalkSense” Is Your Defense

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, or 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 a doctor or a podiatrist if you experience any unusual pain or numbness.

A Walk is Closer Than You Think

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.