

WHY WALK?

- **Walking prevents type 2 diabetes.** The Diabetes Prevention Program showed that walking 150 minutes per week and losing just 7% of your body weight (12-15 pounds) can reduce your risk of diabetes by 58%.
- **Walking is good for your brain.** In a study on walking and cognitive function, researchers found that women who walked the equivalent of an easy pace at least 1.5 hours per week had significantly better cognitive function.
- **Walking is good for your bones.** Research shows that postmenopausal women who walk approximately one mile each day have higher whole-body bone density than women who walk shorter distances.
- **Walking helps symptoms of depression.** Walking for 30 minutes three to five times per week for 12 weeks reduced symptoms of depression.
- **Walking improves fitness.** Walking just three times a week for 30 minutes can increase cardiorespiratory fitness.
- **Walking improves physical function.** Research shows that walking improves fitness and physical function and prevents disability in older persons.

Source:
<http://www.medicinenet.com/walking/article.htm>

You may already know how to walk, but here are some extra tips!

WALKING POSTURE

- Stand up straight
- Do not arch your back
- Do not lean forward or backward (this can put strain on back muscles)
- Keep your eyes looking ahead of you, not down
- Chin up about parallel to the ground (this reduces strain on the neck and back)
- Pull in your stomach
- Keep your shoulders slightly back (Shrug once and let your shoulders fall and relax to find the correct positioning)
- Allow your waist to twist as you walk
- Rotate your hips forward and tuck in your behind just a bit to keep from arching your back

STRIDE

- Avoid over-striding, which is taking longer steps to increase speed; it is inefficient and potentially harmful
- Take more, smaller steps
- Concentrate on a powerful push-off while the front foot lands closer to the body
- Try to swing your arms in time with your stride

ARM MOTION

- Keep your elbows bent at 90 degrees
- Do not clench hands, but keep them in a relaxed curl
- With each step, the arm opposite your forward foot comes straight forward
- As the foot goes back, the opposite arm comes straight back
- The hand should not cross the midpoint of your body
- Speed up your arm swing to increase your speed and your legs will follow

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

- Strike the ground first with your heel
- Roll through the step from heel to toe – being flat footed will slow you down
- Flexible shoes will ensure you are able to roll through the step
- Push off a step with your toes
- Breathe naturally, and as you walk, take deep, rhythmic breaths
- Pretend you are walking along a straight line
- Take some water and some food too if you're going on a longer walk
- At first, your shin muscles may tire and be sore until they are strengthened

Adapted From:
<http://www.medicinenet.com/walking/page2.htm>
<http://www.thewalkingsite.com/howtowalk.html>
<http://walking.about.com/cs/beginners/a/howtech.htm>