

# WV Walks

Walking is usually viewed as a means to get from point A to point B. However, as we age, we notice that walking can become a bit more difficult depending on where point B is located. Until, recently, most people never considered walking to be **real** exercise.

However, walking is indeed exercise, and may be the best form of exercise. Walking seems to have also presented itself as the exercise most recommended by doctors, physical education teachers, physical therapists, and other health professionals.

Walking has tremendous possibilities and gets people excited because most everyone can walk. From the brisk 10-minute lunch-time walk to the 20K race walk, walking offers fitness opportunities for the beginner as well as the advanced athlete. Therefore, walking gives us the best chance to aggressively address the lack of physical activity prevalent all over America today.

## Facts about Walking

- Walking can be done with one piece of equipment – a good pair of walking shoes.
- Walking can be done alone or with a companion or in groups. You can decide on a daily basis which one suits you.
- Walking can be done indoors or outdoors.
  - **Indoors:** Many walk indoors at home, or at health centers on treadmills, elliptical machines, or steppers. Indoor tracks are also available at sport complexes or larger arenas in communities. Workplaces and churches often designate walking patterns in their buildings for the walker during inclement weather. Schools have gyms and tracks that can be utilized by children during school hours and the community after hours. The local malls are also great places to walk.
  - **Outdoors:** Many walk outdoors:
    - ◆ On sidewalks,
    - ◆ On paved walking trails,
    - ◆ On paths in the woods, or
    - ◆ On padded tracks, such as you might find at a local high school.
- Walking can be done to music, to nature, or to conversation. Your mood can help you determine what is enjoyable on a given day. Note: A walk has proven to allow family members, friends, and colleagues the chance to get to know each other better and spend more time with each other.
- Fitness level does not matter. Simply get off the couch.
- How far and how fast is not an issue in the beginning.

## Benefits of Walking

- Walking assists in managing a healthy weight. Walking builds muscle, which burns more calories than fat.
- Walking allows for community-wide participation. Many communities struggle to develop inclusive programs that promote health and prevention. Walking is for everyone.
- Walking is fun. Because of the non-competitive nature of an afternoon or evening walk, people can enjoy themselves. Many people find they can speed up or slow down depending on how they feel on a given day or with whom they are walking.
- Walking relieves stress. There are few people of any age who do not experience some level of stress in their daily lives. Taking a walk to get the heart pumping and the limbs moving can enhance well being. The more active people are, the better they feel. Research has proven that exercise can be a dynamic stress reliever and energizer.
- Walking enhances overall mental and physical health. People who walk report feeling more in control, more alert and more positive. People who walk seem to embrace other sorts of health enhancements. In many ways, walking is one small but monumental step toward better health.
- Walking can be done any time of the day. Because of the possibilities for walking venues abound, walking can fit your schedule. Have 10 minutes? Take a walk.

## Walking recommendations:

- Walk for 30 minutes or more 5 days per week.
- Walk “as if you are going somewhere”. This is neither a casual stroll nor a jog. Just walk in a determined manner, as if “to get somewhere”.
- Begin with just 10 minutes (everyone has 10 minutes). Then move up to 20 and 30 minutes when you are ready.