

## *WV Walks*

### **Walking Tips**

1. Getting started – what you need before you head out the door for your first walk:
  - ◆ Comfortable, loose fitting clothes
  - ◆ A watch (to help you shoot for at least 30 minutes)
  - ◆ Identification and change for a phone call
  - ◆ Walking shoes: comfortable and good fitting
2. How long (duration) and how often (frequent)?
  - ◆ Begin with 10-15 minutes every other day
  - ◆ Increase to 20 minutes, then build up to 30 minutes whenever you can
  - ◆ Make it a daily habit (even if only 10 minutes, walk at least 5 days a week)
  - ◆ Go longer when you have the time, faster when you do not (Longer walks build endurance; faster walks build aerobic conditioning; both burn more calories)
3. Benefits:
  - ◆ 30 minutes, 5 days per week contributes to good health and wellness
  - ◆ Regular walking makes you feel better right now
  - ◆ Walking reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, improves mood
  - ◆ 60 minutes of daily walking will help you lose weight
4. Key elements of technique:
  - ◆ Tall, relaxed posture.
  - ◆ Quicker steps; let your stride length come naturally
  - ◆ Bend your arms 90 degrees for a quick, compact arm swing
  - ◆ Land on your heel and push off of your toes each step
5. Walking through Hot Weather:
  - ◆ Hydrate – Drink 4-8 oz of water for every 20 minutes you walk
  - ◆ Adjust – Walk during the cooler early morning or evening hours
  - ◆ Acclimate – Short, slow walks on the first hot days of the season to let your body get used to the heat
  - ◆ Protect – Light reflective clothing, broad brimmed hat, and UVA/UVB sunscreen
  - ◆ Accommodate – Split your walk into two shorter ones
  - ◆ Listen to your body
6. Increasing your time/mileage:
  - ◆ Bump it up gradually, not all at once
  - ◆ Try for walks of 45 to 60 minutes if weight loss is a goal
  - ◆ Speed up to 4 mph or faster to build aerobic fitness
  - ◆ Always remember that 10 minutes is MUCH better than nothing

7. When weather is bad; indoor options?

- ◆ A health club or “Y” with treadmills (many have one-day passes)
- ◆ Mountaineer Mall, Morgantown Mall, or the WVU Coliseum
- ◆ Use the halls and stairs at work

Note: One minute of stair climbing (2 to 3 flights) is worth 3 minutes of walking – Do 20 to 30 flights and you’ve gotten your 30 minute walk.

8. Too busy?

- ◆ If you cannot do a specific walking workout today, wear your pedometer (check with Pathfinder, Whitetail, Walmsley’s or online at [wvonthemove.org](http://wvonthemove.org)) all day and try to total 10,000 steps before the day is over.
- ◆ Here’s how:
  - Travel on foot – Park further away from your work
  - Deliver memos on foot, use a bathroom on another floor
  - Take co-workers out for a walking meeting
  - Walk the kids or a friend’s to school or soccer practice

9. The when-you-are-sick Rule of Thumb:

- ◆ If a cold is above your neck (runny nose, congestion, slight headache), it **IS** okay to walk; you may actually feel better.
- ◆ If illness is below your neck (deep cough, body aches and pains, fever) give yourself a rest.

10. Injuries?

- ◆ Walkers are injured far less than runners. (In one 28 week training study, the walkers and runners showed similar improvements in fitness, but runners missed 8 times as many days due to injury, compared to the walkers.)
- ◆ Most likely causes of injury:
  - Wearing shoes too long (purchase new walking shoes every 6 months).
  - Increasing your speed or length of your walks too abruptly; build up gradually.

11. Logging your mileage

- ◆ It has been shown to increase (as much as double) the chance that you will stick with your walking if you log your miles.
- ◆ Keep your logbook accessible. On your nightstand, by the phone, on the frig or somewhere you will see it daily.
- ◆ Set up a system. For example, always record how long and where you walked, your miles, and how it felt. Look for a mix of easy, medium, and hard days.
- ◆ Keep it simple. Try to record too much and you will stop doing it.
- ◆ Keep a running tally of your mileage. It’s motivating to see how far you have traveled.
- ◆ Look back at it once in a while. It’s good to recall routes or walking partners you have enjoyed, and also see how much faster you are going now.

12. Hand weights

- ◆ Hand weights can stress your joints and add complication to the process.
- ◆ To boost the calorie burn, it is better to walk faster with a vigorous arm action. In fact, 50% to 75% of the increased energy expenditure of walking with weights comes simply from swinging your arms (without the weights!)
- ◆ For upper body muscle toning, simply use weights for a concentrated 15 minute upper body workout after your walk two or three days a week – it will be more effective than carrying lighter weights for a full walk.

13. Boost your calorie burn:

- ◆ Walk faster
- ◆ Walk up hills
- ◆ Do intervals – short bursts of higher speed walking

14. Stretch:

- ◆ After a walk, when muscles are warm and loose
- ◆ Be especially sure to stretch muscles of legs, buttocks, and lower back
- ◆ DO NOT BOUNCE – hold the stretch for 4 to 6 slow deep breaths (10-30 seconds)
- ◆ Never lock your knees
- ◆ Never stretch to the point of pain

15. Set Goals---Three things about effective goals setting:

- ◆ Make them internal goals, not external goals.  
**Internal** (good): I'll walk 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week to feel better about myself and have more energy.  
**External** (not so good): I'll walk to lose weight so my significant other will be happy with me.
- ◆ Focus on process, not outcomes.  
**Process** (good): I'll walk 21 days in a row for at least 15 minutes a day.
- ◆ Give yourself rewards for hitting your goals, as simple as going to see a movie or purchase a new walking jacket, or for a big goal (say, six months of 6 day-a-week walking) a trip to visit a friend.

16. Review the benefits of regular exercise

- ◆ Reduced risk for chronic disease: heart disease, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, and some forms of cancer
- ◆ More energy, better mood, and less risk of depression
- ◆ A sense of self-control, self-worth, and empowerment
- ◆ You'll live longer and better!

17. Enlisting support has been shown to drastically increase your chances of success.

Talk about the fact that you are walking.

- ◆ Others will ask how it's going, which keeps you motivated.
- ◆ Family and co-workers may help you make time for your exercise if they know it is important to you.
- ◆ Find a walking partner – which is proven to help get you out the door.

18. How to stick with it?

- ◆ Set a goal to get in shape.
- ◆ Sign up for a walking event (say a 5K or 10K walk)
- ◆ Plan a walking or hiking vacation (and get in shape for it).
- ◆ Remember the hunting season is approaching

19. You don't have to take your walking serious, only regularly. The most important exercise of the day may be to call a friend and set up a walking date.

20. Tired?

- ◆ Walking give you energy.
- ◆ We are usually more mentally than physically fatigued after a day of work.
- ◆ Out The Door For 30 Minutes Or More!!
- ◆ You will return from your walk refreshed. **GUARANTEED!**

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