



GETTING STARTED ON A WALKING PROGRAM



Want to improve your health, lower your stress levels and increase your cardiovascular fitness? There are hundreds of good reasons to put walking on your list of fitness building activities. Walking is easy and efficient, you can do it anywhere at any time, and all you need is a good pair of supportive walking shoes!

YOUR FIRST STEP

Before you begin any new exercise program, it's always a good idea to make your first step a visit to your family doctor. If you have experienced chest pain, loss of balance due to dizziness, or are presently taking medication for blood pressure or heart conditions, consult your doctor BEFORE becoming more physically active. Getting medical clearance is especially important if you are a current or former smoker, if you are overweight, or if there is a history of heart disease in your family.

THE THREE RULES OF FITNESS

Moderation, Consistency and Rest: Three simple but important rules. If you incorporate these into your fitness routine, you will find that moving from a sedentary lifestyle to an active one can be an enjoyable experience, rather than one riddled by pain and frustration.

1. **Moderation:** Train gradually- this gives your body time to adapt to the stresses of training. Doing too much too soon may result in injury and possibly hinder you from continuing the program and ultimately achieving your goals.
2. **Consistency:** Stick with your program – try not to skip a scheduled training day. When you work out consistently, your body has more time to settle into the training demands.
3. **Rest:** Allow your body time to recover – make sure you allow yourself at least one rest day between training days. Once your body has adjusted to your training program, you'll be stronger and more efficient.





SET YOURSELF UP TO SUCCEED

The key to becoming a regular exerciser is to build your workout into your daily routine. Make your walking sessions a habit by choosing a time that works best for you to exercise, and try to stick with it. Maybe you like to exercise first thing in the morning, or find that you can clear your head by taking a break at lunch. After deciding what time works best for you, pull out your calendar and schedule an hour-long appointment with yourself, 3 times a week, or as the program requires.

Tip: Make time to workout: Plan to exercise at a time that is most convenient for you. Some people like to get up early and start off their day with their exercise regime. Others plan to fit it in during their lunch hour or some time after work. The point is that you schedule and protect your time or else invariably we can all think of something else that we need to be doing and our workout will go out the window.