

WALKING TOWARDS WELLNESS



Overview

A brisk-paced walk can help you look and feel better, increase your energy and enhance an overall feeling of well being. The **Walking Towards Wellness** program provides information and motivational tools to help you start a regular walking activity, no matter what your current level of fitness.

Did you know?

Every step taken will help to build a healthier you. A daily routine of 30 minutes or more of moderately-paced or brisk walking can control weight, lower cholesterol, strengthen the heart and reduce the likelihood of serious health problems.

Getting Started

The U.S. Surgeon General reports that a minimum of 30 minutes of regular moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, can produce long term health benefits. In addition, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports recommends at least 30 minutes a day, on five or more days a week, or 10,000 steps daily, measured by a pedometer.

The **Walking Towards Wellness** program is a 12-week walking program designed for everyone, at every fitness level. Walking is easy, safe and inexpensive. It burns calories and is an ideal fat-burning activity. It conditions the heart, improves muscle tone and strength and can reduce stress.

Setting Goals

Setting individual goals is an optional component of this health improvement challenge. However, goal setting does correlate with long-term success.

Prior to starting the program as listed below, please consult with your primary care physician to receive medical clearance to participate in the program.

To establish your individual goals and design your walking program, please follow these steps:

1. Baseline

To establish your baseline, please include all of your scheduled walking activities, such as walking to work, walking during lunch or after work, etc. At the end of each day, record your minutes in the Tracking Log.

2. Benchmark

Your benchmark is the longest amount of time you spent walking on any given day after establishing your baseline the first week. Use that number as your goal for the second and third weeks. Log your walks and at the end of the third week review your Tracking Log. If you averaged your goal, add another 3 minutes or 500 steps to your goal for the fourth and fifth weeks.

3. Build

At the end of each 2-week period, try to add 3 minutes or 500 steps to your walking goal. If you had difficulty reaching your goal, walk at the same level until you build enough endurance to increase your target. Continue to log your walking activity to prevent slipping back or dropping out. If you find yourself falling behind your average daily goal, do not become discouraged. To maintain your motivation, keep logging your progress and stay with the same number of steps or minutes instead of increasing your target.

Recognize that 30 minutes a day or 10,000 steps may not be a realistic goal for you. If you are overweight, obese or have other chronic health problems, speak with your doctor to determine a goal that may be more appropriate.

How does the program work?

Here are the "steps" you take:

- Try to walk aerobically (brisk pace) everyday for at least 30 minutes. If you don't have the time to devote 30 minutes consecutively, aim to walk 10 minutes, three times a day at different intervals.
- There is not an established amount of time that is required of you to walk each day, but again, it is recommended that you walk for a minimum of 30 minutes a day. Be sure to record all scheduled walking activity, especially the 10 minutes intervals.
- Track your time in your Tracking Log. The Tracking Log is color-coded into three 4-week blocks of time. Prior to the completion ***of this program, you will receive notification to submit your Tracking Log to your Program Coordinator. Please remember to submit your Tracking Log at the end of the program to your Program Coordinator. The success of this program is dependent upon the collection of the Tracking Logs.***
- During your participation in this program, you will receive helpful tips and reminders to motivate and encourage you to continue walking.

If you're not sure that you're ready to start this program or engage in any physical activity, please read [Stages of Change in Adding Physical Activity into Your Life-Where Are You?](#) from the Centers for Disease Control Nutrition & Physical Activity Office. This article is included in the participant packet. It will assist you in making an informed decision to participate in the Walking Towards Wellness Program. Also, as with all exercise programs, please contact your primary care physician to obtain permission to participate.

Tracking Log

The Tracking Log is a tool to track your progress towards your goals. At the orientation meeting, the Program Coordinator will provide you with your Tracking Log.



Are there incentives or rewards?

Absolutely! Probably the best incentive or reward is the positive feelings that you will experience when you meet your goal of walking 30 minutes a day. Think about the good feelings that exercise gives you and reflect on what you have accomplished. This type of internal reward can help you make a long-term commitment to regular exercise. Remember to reward yourself when you reach a goal—no matter how small the goal may be to you—it is a goal that was accomplished! You should set short-term and long-term goals. A reward can be a walk on the beach, new clothes in a smaller size, etc.

External rewards will motivate you! When you reach a long-term goal, treat yourself to a new pair of walking shoes, a new CD to use on your walks or a new water bottle.

Walking Basics

Before you start your walking program, be sure to follow a few basic principles that will keep you safe and comfortable.

- If you have a health condition or have not engaged in any regular physical activity for a long time, especially men over 40 and women over 50, consult your primary care physician. You should receive medical clearance from your primary care physician to start the program.
- Choose comfortable, supportive sneakers, such as running, walking or cross training sneakers.
- If you're going for a longer walk, do a warm up with stretching exercises and a cool-down period after your walk. This will reduce stress on your heart and muscles.
- Maintain a brisk pace. You should keep up your pace but still be able to talk while walking.
- Practice correct posture—head upright, arms bent at the elbow and swing your bent arms as you walk.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after your walk to cool working muscles and keep your body hydrated. It is recommended that you carry a water bottle while you are walking.

