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April 18, 2011

# WELLNESS WEEKLY

## Walking for Wellness

Walking is one of the easiest ways to get the exercise you need to stay healthy. You don't need any special equipment, just a pair of comfortable shoes. There are no new techniques to learn, since you already know how to walk. Walking is a very low impact activity, that doesn't put much stress on your joints. You can start out at any pace that is comfortable to you and walk for as long as you'd like. Over time you will gradually increase the intensity of your walking workout by walking for longer periods of time, increasing the speed as well as the incline you walk at.

Experts recommend at least 2½ hours of moderate activity (such as brisk walking, brisk cycling, or yard work) a week. It's fine to walk in spurts of 10 minutes or more throughout your day and week.

### Key Points

- Before you start, talk with your doctor to make sure it's okay for you to begin a walking program.
- Start with a short-term goal. For example, walk for 5 or 10 minutes every day. Or increase your number of steps by 300 to 500 each day.
- After you've made walking a habit, set a longer-term goal. You may want to set a goal of walking briskly for at least 30 minutes a day or work up to 10,000 steps a day. You can try to do this 5 days a week or more.
- You can wear a pedometer to track your steps each day.
- To stay motivated, find a walking partner, such as a family member, friend, or coworker. Daily dog walks are also a great way to keep up your walking routine.

### Top reasons to walk...

1. Walking strengthens your heart
2. Walking prevents type 2 diabetes
3. Walking is good for your bones
4. Walking helps alleviate symptoms of depression
5. Walking reduces the risk of breast and colon cancer
6. Walking improves overall fitness

