

WALKING FOR HEALTH

HEALTH &
LIFESTYLES



WALKING FOR HEALTH

Walking is a natural, healthy and safe form of exercise. A brisk half-an-hour walk burns about 300 calories - the amount of energy in a cheese sandwich or 4 ounces (100 grams) of lean meat. Walking is safer than running because walking does not place a heavy strain on the foot and thus prevents injuries. For un-trained people walking should be the first and for many the main exercise activity. This is especially true for older, inactive persons. Walking is the wisest choice for an overweight person.



What Walking Can Do For You

For many of us a walk is a 15 minute stroll. For fitness we need to walk briskly and continuously for at least a half an hour at a pace that stimulates the heart, lungs and muscles. Walking is often the pathway that leads one to other exercises and sports which were never thought possible.

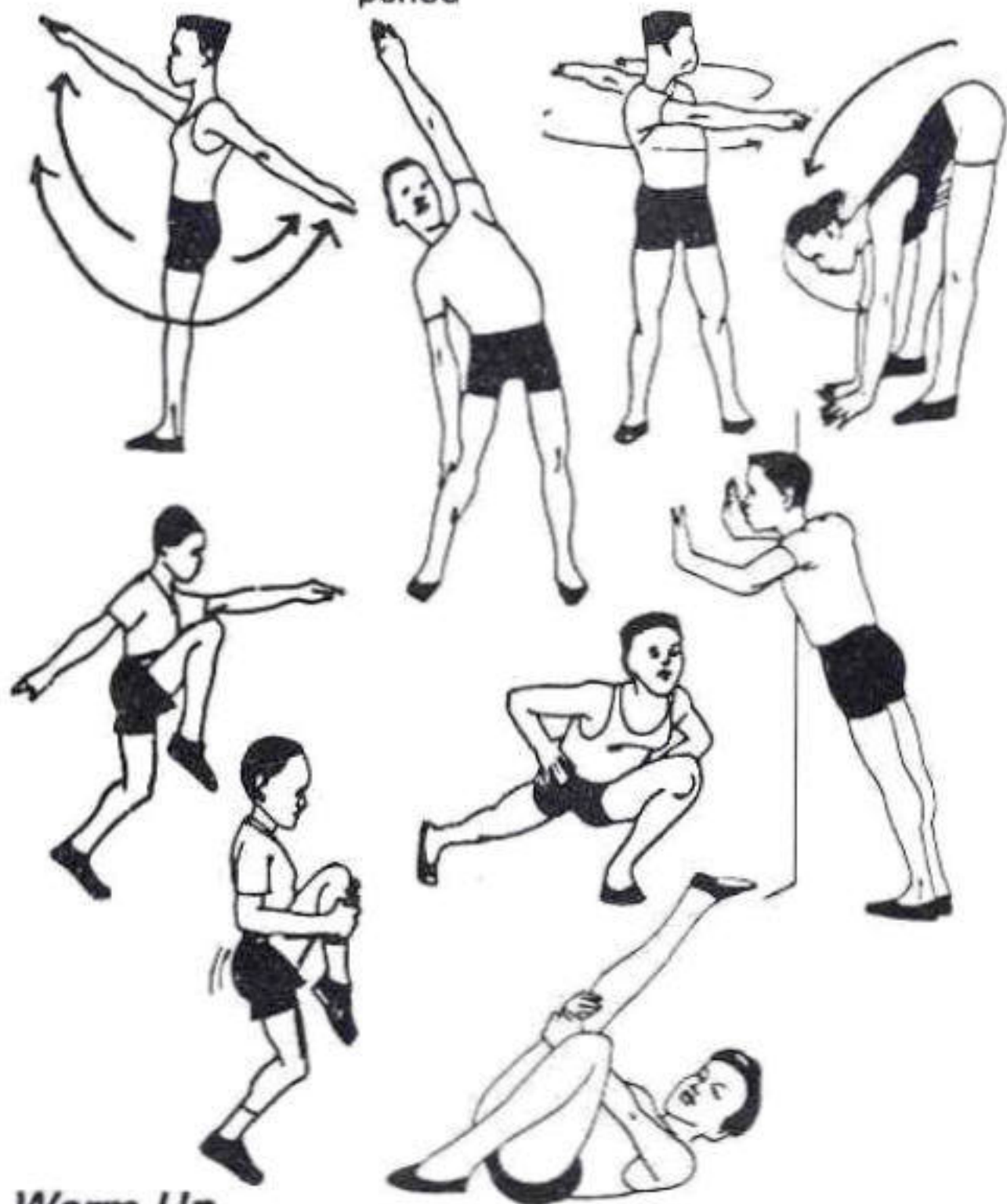
It's highly recommended that the person who has been inactive go slowly at first when beginning a walking programme.

As we progress through the walking session, our first goal should be to cover as much distance as possible in an hour's time, keeping well within our physical limits. When we can walk for three miles (5-6 kilometres) briskly with ease, we are ready for more vigorous activities.

HOW TO BUILD A WALKING SESSION

The three segments of a walking session are:

1. Warm up
2. Vigorous walking - the conditioning period
3. Cool down



Warm Up

To warm up, walk slowly and do some stretching activities. It is important to warm up properly before each walking session. The purpose is to:

- prepare you mentally for the strenuous workout
- prepare your body for the upcoming walk

- increase the blood flow and the temperature of the blood and muscles
- stimulate the heart and lungs
- stretch muscles and tendons
- prevent muscle soreness
- prevent unnecessary injuries

The time required for warm-up varies with the individual, but generally 5-10 minutes are sufficient.

The Main Conditioning or Walking Period

We should walk briskly enough to bring us close to our target heart rate. The key is to tailor our programme to our personal needs. As fitness improves over time we can modify our exercise and increase our total work out in each session. The exercise should always be set so that afterwards or within an hour we feel fully recovered and rested.

The Cool Down

Continue walking at a slower pace and repeat some of the warm up exercises, especially the stretches. The cooling down period allows the blood from the feet and arms to be pumped back to the heart. Generally a five to ten minute period is sufficient for cooling down. For most persons the heart rate (beats per minute) at the end of the cooling down exercise should be below 100.

ESTABLISHING YOUR WALKING PROGRAMME

There are several basic things to bear in mind right before starting a walking programme. These are:

- **Make it personal.**
- **Your present level of fitness is the key factor for determining a safe starting point. Remember that you can never begin too low and the steps you take can never be too small.**

What to Wear

You should wear shoes and comfortable clothing. Shoes with a good multilayered sole, a strong heel

counter and a flexible forefoot are excellent for walking. When choosing shoes be sure you try on more than one pair. Walk around in them. They should feel so good you can't wait to get going. The heavier you are the greater the possibility of injuring areas of your feet and lower legs.



Be sure to wear comfortable clothes such as a cotton T-shirt and shorts. In hot, humid weather like ours, we do not need sweat suits, but clothing should fit loosely. It should be porous enough to allow free circulation of air and heat to and from the body. Cotton or a combination of cotton and polyester is the best type of fabric to wear. Cotton absorbs sweat and allows it to evaporate easily.

How to Walk

In the beginning, walk at a pace that is comfortable, natural and rhythmic. Let your arms swing normally in a relaxed way. Keep your body erect - not curving your shoulders or bending your head. Let your heel hit the ground first and then roll on the ball of your foot.

After a few walking sessions your muscles and breathing will begin to adjust to the walking pace. As you get in better shape you can increase your pace by striding out and walking faster. The idea is not to be breathless, but to be breathing faster and with greater depth than when you are more relaxed. If during your walk you find it difficult to keep up the pace, slow down for about a minute to recover before returning to your original pace. Alternating brisk walking with slower walking can allow you to sustain your workout and to accomplish your distance goal for that day.

Where to Walk

It is best to walk on a stable, smooth surface, but make the best use of whatever facility you have. A regular paved road, sidewalk, games field, beach or other sandy surface, or track in the hills are all right. In addition, walk in a safe place. Avoid hills in the early stages of your training and avoid automobile traffic and the accompanying pollutants.

Walking is usually an outdoor activity and in most cases

WALKING CHART

STEP	SESSION	VIGOROUS WALKING (Min.)	DISTANCE GOALS (Miles*)	PEAK EXERCISING HEART RATE	GENERAL COMMENTS
1	01 [] - 02 []	15 to 20	0.5 to 0.8		
2	03 [] - 04 []	20	0.9 to 1.0		
3	05 [] - 06 []	24	1.1 to 1.2		
4	07 [] - 08 []	28	1.3 to 1.4		
5	09 [] - 10 []	32	1.5 to 1.6		
6	11 [] - 12 []	36	1.7 to 1.8		
7	13 [] - 14 []	40	1.9 to 2.0		
8	15 [] - 16 []	44	2.1 to 2.2		

*To convert miles to kilometres multiply by 1.6.

determining the distance you walk may be difficult. You can use car mileage as an indicator. If you estimate the distance keep track of the time you walk.

A WALKING CHART FOR BEGINNERS

Walking charts are mere guides of what you should do and how you should walk to get the most benefit.

Modify your day's workout according to your feelings. If you cannot finish the walking distance for that day, then when you come back the next time repeat the previous day's workout until you can complete it. Keep an accurate record of your workouts.

During the first four weeks, walk 3-4 times a week. Rest days are important to help your body recover and adjust to the training. If you miss one or more walking sessions you must adjust your programme one or more below the last one completed. Increase the distance you walk and/or walk faster.

How to use the Walking Chart

1. A step on the chart represents two workouts - the second is a repeat of the first workout in the step. If your walking seems excessive, cut back to the previous step or continue repeating the workout until you feel better. Otherwise you can move to the next step.
2. Try to increase your walking time by four minutes every two days until you can walk for one hour. Then walk the same distance faster until you reach an advanced maintenance level.

REMEMBER

1. Warm up for 5-10 minutes with slow and easy walking for three or four minutes and do stretching exercises.
2. For your conditioning, walk briskly, keeping in mind the distance and time.
3. Try to walk near your target exercise heart rate. After 10 minutes walking check your pulse rate.
4. If you become tired, your pulse rate may be too high or there may be other reasons. Slow down to a comfortable walking pace.

***ENJOY
WALKING
FOR
FITNESS!***

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