

Walking Program

One of the easiest ways to improve your cardiovascular fitness is to participate in a regular walking program. Walking is low-risk and easy to start, and has proven health benefits. A regular walking program can:

- Lower your blood pressure
- Boost your bone strength
- Prevent weight gain
- Increase your energy and stamina

How Much, How Often

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that all adults and older adults get 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise. You can do that by walking briskly for 30 minutes on most or all days of the week.

If you haven't been active for a long time, it's important to build up your endurance gradually. For example, start out with 5 or 10 minutes at a time and gradually increase your time or distance each week.



An activity tracker (like a Fitbit or a pedometer) can help you keep track of your endurance activity, set goals, and measure progress.

Most inactive people get fewer than 5,000 steps a day, and some very inactive people get only 2,000 steps a day.

Wear the activity tracker for a few days to see how you're doing. If you get:

- Fewer than 5,000 steps a day, gradually try to add 3,000 to 4,000 more steps a day.
- About 8,000 steps a day, you're probably meeting the recommended activity target.
- 10,000 or more steps a day, you can be confident that you're getting an adequate amount of endurance activity.

Safety

- **Monitor your intensity.** To get the maximum health benefit, your pace should be brisk and your effort during walking should be **moderate intensity**. You should feel like you are breathing a little faster, feel warmer and have a slightly faster heartbeat. You should always be able to breathe comfortably and hold a conversation as you walk.
- **Warm up and cool down** with several minutes of slow-paced walking. This will give your body a chance to get ready to work and gradually return to rest at the end.
- **Choose comfortable, loose fitting clothing.** Make sure you dress in layers so you can add or remove clothes as needed.
- **Wear supportive footwear.** The best choice is a low-heeled shoe with a flexible, non-skid sole.
- **Find a safe place to walk.** Choose a familiar route that is flat and free of obstacles. Watch out for uneven sidewalks. Walk during the day or in well-lit areas at night, and be aware of your surroundings

Progressing


- Gradually increase your walking time to 30 minutes by walking longer distances. This may take several weeks or months, depending on your fitness level.
- For a challenge, try increasing your pace or walking up hills.

How do I know if I am doing too much?

- You may experience some muscle or joint discomfort **while** walking, but you shouldn't have pain. Stop walking if you have pain and contact your therapist.
- You may experience some muscle or joint discomfort **after** walking, especially if you are just beginning your program or if you have done more than usual. If you have pain that lasts for more than 2 hours after your walk, you have done too much. Try to scale back and see how you feel. If the problem persists, contact your therapist.

Here is a Walking Program for you to try.

Week	Sessions/ day	Sessions/ week	Walking Time	Weekly total
1	3	3	10 min.	90 min.
2	3	3	12 min.	
3	3	3	14 min.	
4	2	3	16 min.	
5	2	4	18 min.	
6	2	4	20 min.	
7	2	4	22 min.	
8	1	4	24 min.	
9	1	5	26 min.	
10	1	5	28 min.	
11	1	5	30 min.	150 min.
12	1	5+	30+ min.	



- Fit walking into your schedule whenever you can. That may mean three 10-minute walks over the course of a day.
- The best schedule is one that keeps you walking and keeps you fit!