

The human body thrives on movement

"Walking is man's best medicine" Hippocrates

Positive steps

It is no secret that keeping active helps us to maintain good health, prevent chronic disease and reduce the risk of degeneration. But being active doesn't need to be a strenuous three-hour workout at the gym. The best type of activity for you - and one you are likely to stick with - is one you enjoy and that fits easily into your life. It can be as simple as increasing the amount you walk each day.

Continue reading and you will find more information about the health benefits of walking, how a pedometer can help, plus tools to set and reach your walking goals. Establishing healthy habits now may mean you will enjoy a longer, healthier, happier future.

Keep in mind this information is general in nature, however it does contain all the information you need to get started. It is always beneficial to consult your friendly healthcare provider to monitor your progress and help set monthly health goals.

10 reasons to get walking:

1. **Build energy and endurance.** A brisk walk can boost your heart and lung capacity, increasing the amount of oxygen-rich blood you can get to your muscles. Over time this can help build endurance.
2. **Lower your risks of diabetes.** Regular walking can help keep your blood sugar levels healthy and, in turn reduce your chances of getting diabetes.
3. **Feel better.** Research shows that people who exercise regularly have fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety.
4. **Look after your heart.** Walking regularly can help lower your blood pressure and levels of 'bad' (LDL) cholesterol improving your heart health.
5. **Stay in shape.** A brisk 30 min walk can burn more than 500 extra kilo joules helping you to feel and look great.
6. **Reduce your risk of cancer.** According to the cancer council, physical activities such as walking can greatly reduce your risk of bowel and post-menopausal breast cancer.
7. **Build strong bones, joints and muscles.** Walking helps keep your bones strong to protect against osteoporosis - which affects both men and women. And stronger muscles can also better support joints, often easing the symptoms of arthritis.
8. **Prevent dementia.** According to studies, exercise may help prevent against dementia by improving blood flow to the brain.
9. **Invest in your health.** 30 min or more of walking on most days of the week (adding around 3000 to 4000 steps) can help lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes and bowel cancer.
10. **Start now!** It is easy. Walking is a gentle, low-impact exercise that comes naturally to your body. It is simple and can ease you into a higher level of fitness and health.

Getting started

Walking regularly may be one of the best things you can do for your health. Physical activity, such as walking, can help reduce your risk of chronic disease, elevate your mood and trim your waistline, just to name a few benefits. But where do you start?

Talk to your chiropractor

If you have been inactive, have heart disease (or a family history of heart disease) or any major health problems, check with your chiropractor about activities are suited to you.

If the shoe fits

If you plan to walk regularly, it is important to feel comfortable. Wearing the wrong shoes for your foot type or shoes that are too old and lack support can put off even the most avid walker. A podiatrist can assess your foot type and direct you to the right athletic shoe. Feet vary, so it is important to have a shoe that supports you in the right way.

Generally, the best shoe for everyday wear is one that can be fastened with the lace, has a heel cup, bends freely at the toe, but not in the middle - and is higher than 2cm off the ground.

And if it doesn't suit your work day outfit, keep a pair of good walking shoes or runners in your bag and store them at work, ready for your morning, lunchtime or evening walk.

Stay safe

Warming up by walking slowly for a few minutes before stepping up the pace. Make sure you stay well hydrated and take a bottle of water with you. If you are out in the sun remember to slip slop slap. At night or in low light wear light coloured or reflective clothing.

Make it social

One of the best ways to stay motivated is to exercise with friends. Why not try a community based walking group? It can be a fun and social way to get active and meet new people. Visit your local government website to find a walking group in your area. Or you can set up your own by gathering your friends and neighbours together for a regular session.

There are plenty of websites where you can find inspiration, new routes and share experiences with others.

Active healthy Lockyer

Bush walkers guide

Local walking locations Gatton, Laidley, Lowood, Withcott etc.

mapmywalk.com available online and as a mobile app, allows you to map and share your walking routes. You can even track the distance, pace and elevation of your walks.

Every step counts

Use a pedometer to stay active. A pedometer can show you how active you are by measuring the number of steps you take each day. Simply clip it to your waistband as soon as you get up and take it off just before bedtime.

Wear your pedometer daily while sticking to your normal routine to give you an idea of your daily steps. You can then compare your daily average to the guide on this page and, if you are keen to improve, slowly increase your daily steps to achieve greater physical activity.

Experts recommend a target of at least 10 000 steps a day for healthy adults. This number is linked to lower blood pressure and a leaner waistline. It may sound like a lot, but you will be surprised at how achievable 10000 steps really is when you consider how many you take just around the house, at work, running errands or shopping. Add a daily 30 min walk (around 3000-4000 steps) into the mix and you will almost be there.

Remember that a typical pedometer only measures the steps you take. Other activities like cycling, swimming or strength training, for instance won't be measured by a pedometer. So it is possible to be very active and still do fewer than 10,000 steps in a day.

The 10,000 steps health promotion program recommends increasing your step count slowly - by no more than 1,000 to 2,000 steps each week.

Steps per day	Activity level
<5,000	Sedentary
5,000-7,500	Low activity
7,500-10,000	Moderate activity
10,000-12,500	Ideal activity
>12,500	Highly active

4 steps to staying motivated:

1. **Plan ahead and prioritise.** Pencil some walking time into your diary - just as you would with any commitment. And if you are not used to being active, start with shorter walks and gradually build up your time and distance. It is always wise to prepare a change of clothes for you to freshen up after your walk.
2. **Walk and talk or walk and listen.** Walking is great excuse to spend time with your loved ones and motivate yourself at the same time. Walk to your local cafe or shops instead of driving or take a stroll through parkland or along the beach. Listening to a motivational talk or your favourite music is also a great way to give yourself an emotional lift, particularly during a tough day.
3. **Be creative with incidental exercise.** Sometimes finding time and motivation to exercise can be hard. Be creative by making walking part of your everyday life - walk on your lunch break or take the stairs instead of the lift or escalator.
4. **Keep track and journal your exercise.** It only has to be a simple entry, but keeping track of your progress by using a weekly chart to get you started. Seeing your results can help you stay motivated and improve over time.

Step it up a notch

Are you ready to turn your walk into a workout?

- **Interval training.** As you get fitter, increase the intensity. Include bursts of more intense activity in your walking routine to help improve your fitness. Alternate between walking as fast as you can for a few minutes and then walking at your normal pace for a few minutes. Then when you are ready for an extra challenge try alternating between jogging and walking. A great way to do this is to use lamp posts, power poles, trees or driveways. Pick a landmark in the distance to run to, then a landmark to walk to, you will find your daily exercise routine will go much faster and fitness levels greatly increase.
- **Ups and downs.** Where possible for the extra challenge pick a walking routine which contains hills or steps. This boosts your stamina and can help target different muscles groups. Walking up hill will strengthen your thighs and calf muscles. When walking down hill try and keep your knees slightly bent to reduce impact and jarring through knee joint itself. It is also beneficial to take shorter more frequent steps and if you are still feeling unstable reduce your speed.
- **The sweet sweat of success.** Walk at a moderate intensity level. The national physical activity guidelines recommend going at a pace that's comfortable enough to talk but not to sing. This is when your heart rate slightly increases so your heart and lungs are working harder but not too hard.