

Health Notes

Just Try Walking

by Craft Chiropractic Associates, PC

While some fitness enthusiasts relentlessly seek out the latest, trendiest exercise crazes, many others are returning to good, old fashioned walking to help them feel great and get into shape. Whether enjoying the wonder of nature, or simply the company of a friend, walking can be a healthy invigorating experience. And thanks to its convenience and simplicity, walking just might be right for you too.

You don't need to become a member of an expensive gym to go walking. And except for a good pair of walking shoes, it requires virtually no equipment.

The first item of business when beginning your walking program is to select the right pair of shoes. Dr. McAndrews recommends the following tips:

☛ Make sure the shoes you purchase fit properly. The balls of your feet should rest exactly at the point where the toe end of the shoe bends during walking.

☛ Avoid high-top shoes that often cover the entire ankle, limiting your foot's ability to move freely and naturally. Opt instead for shoes that offer your ankle a fuller range of motion.

☛ Select shoes with plenty of cushioning in the soles to absorb the impact of your walking.

Getting Started

Walking just 12 minutes every other day can offer important health benefit. Walking 20 minutes every other day is even better. But in order to increase your longevity, try to eventually work up to 30 minutes,

five days per week. The following tips should help you get started safely and smoothly.

☛ Move your arms freely in coordination with the opposite leg.

☛ Don't stoop your head or look down as you walk. This will challenge the normal forward curve of your neck, which, in turn, will cause you to carry your weight improperly.

☛ Don't carry weights or dumbbells when walking. They're better used as a separate part of your exercise regimen. If you do carry weights while walking, be sure that they are light enough that they do not interfere with the "rhythm" of your arms and legs; in order to counterbalance the body when your right arm moves forward, the left leg should be moving forward, etc.

☛ Expect a little soreness in the thighs and calves for the first week or two. If you experience more than soreness, check with your doctor of chiropractic.

☛ Walk briskly with "purpose." Simply sauntering, while relaxing and enjoyable, is not an effective form of cardiovascular exercise.

Keep in mind that if you have not previously been physically active, you should consult your doctor before beginning an exercise program. Begin slowly with a walk of perhaps half of a mile, at a pace that does not cause discomfort. Continue this for about two weeks, then start to increase the pace and length of time walking.

Eventually - depending on your age - you can build your "target" heart rate/pulse to either 120 beats per minute or, if younger, as many as 140 beats per minute. For the average adult, a heart rate of 120 beats per minute would require walking at about 2 miles per hour, while a heart rate of 140 beats per minute would require a pace of 4½ miles/hour. ♣



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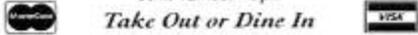
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