

## Walking 101

It's a great way to stay in shape and there's a right way to do it

By Carolyn Butler

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Walking is one of the easiest, most relaxing forms of exercise—not to mention among the most effective. “Walking is a low-impact aerobic activity that burns substantial calories but is very low injury risk,” says Mark Fenton, a champion racewalker and author of *The Complete Guide to Walking for Health, Weight Loss and Fitness*.

There are also many clear-cut health benefits, says Caroline Richardson, MD, an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Michigan and research scientist at the Ann Arbor VA Medical Center. She cites numerous studies showing that a regular walking program can aid weight loss and weight maintenance; improve cardio-respiratory fitness, cholesterol, blood pressure, and glucose management; and help prevent conditions like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and a number of cancers.

### How to Walk the Walk

To make the most of your exercise time, consider these four tips for a faster, more efficient technique, adapted from *Walking: The Ultimate Exercise for Optimum Health*, a workout CD by Andrew Weil, MD, and Mark Fenton.



#### 1. Stand tall.

Pull the top of your head toward the sky. Aim for no slouch in your shoulders, forward lean from the waist, or excess sway in your back. **CUE:** Keep your eyes on the horizon; don't let your chin drop.



#### 2. Focus on quicker steps, not longer ones.

Yes, your stride gets longer as you walk faster. But that shouldn't be your goal. Let it happen naturally, instead, concentrate on taking faster steps. **CUE:** Count how many steps you take in 20 seconds: 40 for healthy benefits; 45 for weight loss; 50 to build aerobic fitness.



#### 3. Bend your arms.

Hold your elbows at a right angle so your arms can swing more quickly, target a quick, compact arm swing. **CUE:** Your hands should trace an arc from alongside your waistband on the back swing, and to chest height (but no higher) in the front.



#### 4. Push off of your toes.

Consciously push off of your toes and generate as much boost as possible at the end of each step. **CUE:** Feel like you're shoving someone behind you the bottom of your shoe on every stride.

### Let's Get Started!

To begin a walking program, just get out there and put one foot in front of the other, say experts, who recommend starting slowly and gradually increasing the amount of activity: Try taking a leisurely stroll with your teen, toddler, or dog; doing an extra lap or two around the mall before you start shopping (especially if the weather is still a bit iffy); using the stairs instead of the elevator on the way to your office; and parking your car a couple of spots farther from the grocery store or, better yet, ambling all the way there. Add in some pre- and postworkout stretches, and when you feel ready for a more regimented routine, try this four-week beginner's program, recommended by Mark Fenton in *The Complete Guide to Walking for Health, Weight Loss and Fitness*.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<b>SUNDAY</b>	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
<b>MONDAY</b>	10 minutes	15 minutes	20 minutes	20 minutes
<b>TUESDAY</b>	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
<b>THURSDAY</b>	25 minutes	15 minutes	20 minutes	25 minutes
<b>FRIDAY</b>	OFF	OFF	OFF	OFF
<b>SATURDAY</b>	20 minutes	25 minutes	25 minutes	30 minutes



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## Carbs: How to Read The Label

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### Whole-Wheat Bread

**Nutrition Facts**  
 Serving Size 1 slice (32 g) **Ⓐ**  
 Servings Per Container 21  
 Amount Per Serving [1]  
 Calories 80  
 Calories from Fat 10  
 Total Fat 1 g  
 Saturated Fat 0 g  
 Cholesterol 0 mg  
 Sodium 170  
 Total Carbohydrate 14 g **Ⓑ**  
 Dietary Fiber 2 g **Ⓒ**  
 Sugars 2 g **Ⓓ**  
 Protein 4 g

- Note the **Serving Size**. For this bread, it's one slice.
- Total Carbohydrate** is for one serving. One slice of this bread has 14 grams of carb. Make a sandwich and you'll have 28 grams of carb from bread. (If you make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, you'll need to add the grams of carb from the jelly, too—about 13 grams per tablespoon.)
- Total Carbohydrate** includes the grams of **Dietary Fiber**. Fiber is not digested and doesn't raise blood glucose. The general rule is: if a serving of the food has 5 or more grams of fiber, subtract the grams of fiber from Total Carbohydrate. Some people call what's left "net carbs" or "available carb."
- These could be **Sugars** that naturally occur in the food, or they could be added sugars. The grams of Sugars are already included in Total Carbohydrate, so you don't have to pay special attention to this line.



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