



WALKING FOR HEART HEALTH

The American way of life has changed the American way of fitness. Today, few jobs require regular or rigorous physical activity. Many Americans ride rather than walk, use elevators instead of stairs, and sit at home rather than being physically active during free time. Evidence suggests that even low- to moderate-intensity activities can have both short- and long-term benefits. If performed daily, they help lower your risk of heart disease. For inactive people, the trick is to get started.

Walking is an easy way to begin a physical activity program because it does not require special facilities or equipment other than well-made, comfortable—shoes and a safe place to walk.

Below is a sample walking program. If you find a particular week's pattern tiring, repeat it before going on to the next pattern. You do not have to complete the walking program in 15 weeks. Use the walking log on the reverse side to chart your progress.



Sample Walking Program (3 sessions per week)

	Warm Up	Exercise—Period	Cool Down	Total
Week 1	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 5 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	15 minutes
Week 2	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 7 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	17 minutes
Week 3	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 9 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	19 minutes
Week 4	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 11 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	21 minutes
Week 5	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 13 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	23 minutes
Week 6	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 15 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	25 minutes
Week 7	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 18 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	28 minutes
Week 8	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 20 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	30 minutes
Week 9	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 23 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	33 minutes
Week 10	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 26 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	36 minutes
Week 11	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 28 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	38 minutes
Week 12	Walk slowly 5 minutes	Walk briskly 30 minutes	Walk slowly 5 minutes	40 minutes

After week 12, continue with at least three exercise sessions per week. Gradually increase your brisk walking time to 30-60 minutes, three or four times per week.

