

THE HEALTHY FACTS OF WALKING

Walking is one of the simplest and safest aerobic exercises you can do. It will help you strengthen your bones, control your weight, and condition your heart and lungs. Being consistent in your walking exercise routine is one of the most important factors in developing a healthy physical activity program. Research has shown that people who walk approximately 20-25 miles per week outlive those who don't walk by several years.

The following are some quick facts about walking:

On average, every minute of walking can extend your life by 1.5 to 2 minutes. That's about a 2 for 1 trade-off!

Walking an extra 20 minutes each day will burn off 7 pounds of body fat per year.

To burn off 1 plain M&M candy, you need to walk the full length of a football field. Think about that next time you dip your hand into a candy bowl at someone's office!

Longer, moderately-paced daily walks (40 minutes at 60% to 65% maximum heart rate) are best for losing weight.

Shorter, faster walks (20-25 minutes at 75% to 85% maximum heart rate) are best for conditioning your heart and lungs.

Walking provides the following benefits:

- Improves efficiency of your heart and lungs
- Burns body fat
- Raises your metabolism so you are burning calories faster, even while you rest
- Helps control your appetite
- Increases your energy
- Helps relieve stress
- Slows aging
- Reduces levels of cholesterol in your blood
- Lowers high blood pressure
- Helps control and prevent diabetes
- Reduces risk of some forms of cancer including colorectal, prostate, and breast
- Aids rehabilitation from heart attack and stroke
- Promotes intestinal regularity
- Helps promote restful sleep

- Strengthens muscles of your legs, hips, and torso
- Strengthens your bones and reduces bone density loss in older women
- Reduces stiffness in your joints due to inactivity or arthritis
- Relieves most cases of chronic backache
- Improves flexibility
- Improves posture
- Promotes healthier skin due to increased circulation
- Improves mental alertness and memory
- Spurs intellectual creativity and problem solving
- Elevates mood
- Helps prevent and/or reduce depression
- Improves your self-esteem
- Increases sexual vigor
- Helps control addictions to nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, and other drugs

Walking is much more preferable than running or jogging because it creates less stress on your joints, including hips, knees, and ankles. Remember to properly warm up before and cool down after every walking session...your muscles will love you for it!

Nicole Niemiec is founder of <http://www.healthy-insights.com>, a site containing reliable health information for improving your quality of life.