

Fall 30 Daily Walking Challenge

Fall Challenge Emails

Send emails 1x/week each week of the challenge

Week #1



Welcome to the 2009-Fall 30 Walking Challenge!

Congratulations! You are embarking on the Fall 30 Challenge. Pat yourself on the back because increasing your daily activity will benefit you in many ways. Health benefits of activity include reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, obesity, and colon cancer. But that's not all! Additional benefits include increased energy, self-confidence, and metabolism; reduced stress, depression, and anxiety; and it helps to maintain healthy bones, muscles, joints, and weight. Aside from all of these healthy benefits, it is also FUN!

Physical Activity Recommendations:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends the following activity guidelines for adults:

- Aim for at least 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of moderate or 75 minutes (1 hour, 15 minutes) of vigorous aerobic activity per week.
 - Spread activity as evenly as possible throughout the week to reduce the risk of injury.
- Exercise beyond the minimum to gain additional benefits – including weight loss.
 - Aim for 300 minutes of moderate activity or 150 minutes of vigorous activity per week.
- Include muscle-strengthening activities at moderate or high intensity that involve all the major muscle groups.
 - Aim for two or more times a week to gain health benefits you cannot gain from aerobic exercise alone.

5 Technique Mistakes to Avoid as you begin the Fall 30 Challenge:

1. Over-striding: When walkers try to walk faster, a natural inclination is to lengthen your stride in front, reaching out further with your forward foot. This leads to a clumsy, ungainly gait, striking hard with the feet. Your shins hurt and you really don't get any faster. The Cure: Take shorter, quicker steps. Roll through your step with your back foot and leg, getting a good push off.

2. Flapping or Slapping Your Feet: Your feet hit the ground with a slap, you land flat footed with each step, or you develop shin pain. The Cure: Get flexible shoes that bend at the ball of the foot. A pair of running shoes with a low heel is best. To strengthen your shins, ankles, and lower legs try toe raises or tap your toes throughout the day. As part of your warm-up, walk on your heels for 30 seconds.

3. No Arms: You keep your arms still at your sides while walking, or swing them without bending them. You notice that your hands swell quite a bit while walking. The Cure: Bend your arms 90 degrees and swing them naturally back and forth opposite the leg motion.

4. Your Head is Down: You are always looking down, hanging your head and staring at your feet. The Cure: Look up! Good posture for walking allows you to breathe well and provides a long body line to prevent problems with your back, neck, and shoulders. Keep your chin up when walking - it should be parallel to the ground.

5. Leaning and Swaying: You lean forward more than 5 degrees, you lean back, or you have a sway back with or without a forward lean. The Cure: Stand up straight but with relaxed shoulders, chin up and parallel to the ground. Think about walking tall. Think "suck in your gut, tuck in your butt." *A helpful hint:* Strengthen your abdominal muscles through sit-ups and other exercises so you are able to hold yourself straighter.

Source: Adapted from "Ten Walking Mistakes to Avoid" available at www.walking.about.com.

****Remember:**

You should always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program. E-mails sent as part of the "Fall 30 Challenge" are offered as introductions to basic concepts and are not comprehensive or necessarily applicable to a particular individual's circumstances.





Stretching and Soreness



Stretching:

Stretching is one of the most important components to your daily workout, both before and after activity! However, you should warm up for approximately 5 minutes at a slow, easy pace [avoiding speed and hills] before stretching. Never stretch cold muscles or you risk tearing them!

Once warmed up you're ready to do some stretching, which will add flexibility and make walking more comfortable for you. As a rule, begin at the top of your body and work your way down – this will help to ensure that no body part is missed. For a guide to stretching visit the following website for a step-by-step stretching tutorial: <http://walking.about.com/cs/stretching/a/howstretch.htm> .

After completing the most vigorous portion of your walk you are now ready to wind down. You should spend the final 5-10 minutes of your walk at an easy walking pace to even out your heart rate. Finally, you may want to repeat the stretches you did after your warm-up at this point (your muscles are warmer, looser, and have a better blood supply at this point, all of which allow a good stretch to take place).

How sore is too sore?

It doesn't matter whether you've been exercising for 10 years or 10 days, you will inevitably experience muscle soreness. You often begin to feel it 12-48 hours after your exercise session. Muscle soreness is completely normal when beginning an exercise program, trying a new activity, and/or increasing the intensity or duration of an exercise routine. Soreness is typically a signal that your muscles are adapting to new loads, going through a recovery process and getting stronger! This is a positive aspect of training, but you must be careful not to continually overexert yourself or it can quickly turn in to a negative as injuries are sure to follow continuous abuse to your body.

The good news is that there is an easy fix to sore muscles! You must make it a priority to give yourself enough time to rest between your workouts so your muscles have a chance to fully recover.

Take the Quiz...

So, how can you tell if you are pushing it a little too much? The following are signs of over-exercising. Read through and think about your response to each question carefully [and be honest].

Do you:

- Feel faint or nauseous after your session?
- Experience aches and pains in your muscles or joints that last more than a few days?
- Find yourself not be able to finish your normal routine? (Note: this does NOT apply to new exercisers)
- Toss and turn at night without being able to sleep?
- Experience chronic fatigue or feelings of being overly tired?
- Notice that you are getting injured more often?
- Feel like your coordination is off?
- Feel guilty if you miss a workout?
- Have problems in relationships due to making exercise your #1 priority?

If you answered yes to one of the questions above, take a day or two off. Give your body a rest! If you answered yes to a bunch of them, seriously consider changing your exercise routine. Consulting an experienced trainer or exercise physiologist may be warranted for assistance in getting yourself back in balance. You'll feel better, be happier and actually enjoy exercise again!

Source: Self-quiz adapted from www.globalfit.com

Small Additions can make a BIG Difference



Do you walk the same distance and pace most every day?
Do you feel like your fitness improvement has stalled?
Do you want to try something new? Then it's time to explore some different types of exercise!



The 3 Types of Exercise:

Type:	Definition:	Frequency/Duration:	Intensity:	Examples:
Cardio-Respiratory	Aerobic activity that uses large muscle groups and can be maintained continuously.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferably most days of the week • 30-60 minutes accumulated throughout day • <i>This can be split up into shorter sessions [e.g. 10 minutes before breakfast, lunch and dinner, etc].</i> 	Moderate or vigorous depending on duration of activity. Changing intensity may help to yield better results as your body will not "get used" to what you are doing on a daily basis.	Brisk walking, running, dancing, swimming, playing basketball, Zumba, etc.
Strength Training	Resistance activity that is performed at a controlled speed and through a full range of motion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 or more times per week • 8-12 repetitions or • 8-10 different exercises 	Enough to enhance muscle strength and improve body composition. This will vary greatly from person to person and depends greatly on fitness level.	Lifting-weights, push-ups, using resistance bands, core strength training [sit-ups, crunches], etc.
Flexibility/Relaxation	Stretching activity that uses the major muscles groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 or more times per week • 4 repetitions of 10-30 seconds 	Enough to develop and maintain a full range of motion.	Pilates, yoga, etc.

		per muscle group		
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Reminder:

Physical activity entails any form of exercise or movement of the body that uses energy. Adding a few additional and various activities to the “Fall 30 Challenge” throughout the week will increase your overall physical fitness. Any type of physical activity will have positive health benefits for you. However a mixture of different types of exercise will keep your body guessing and prevent you from feeling as though you’ve “adjusted” or “stalled” in your exercise efforts. A combination of activity will also increase endurance, body composition [the portions of muscle, bone, and fat that make up a person’s total body weight], strength, and flexibility. So use the stairs; walk or bike to class, work, or the store; scrub floor and wash windows; walk you dog; mow grass, rake leaves, shovel snow, or tend your garden; wash and wax your car; or play with your children. The bottom line – be as active as possible, and remember that some activity is better than none, and more is better than less!



Week 4 email

Congratulations! You are nearing the end of the “Fall 30 Walking Challenge!” You have done a great job and should be proud of all you have accomplished. Be sure to remember that just because the challenge is ending does not mean that your physical activity has to!

The cold Wisconsin winter is quickly approaching. But hibernating is for bears, NOT walkers! Wondering how you can adapt to the changing season and continue to be physically active? If so, read on...



Safe Winter Walking Tips:

- Begin your walk into the wind so you will finish with it at your back.
- Select routes sheltered from the wind where possible.
- Select routes that are cleared of snow or ice or do not have standing puddles or mud slicks to prevent slips.
- Beware of cars. Use caution when walking on roads. Cars may have more difficulty in seeing you in rain or snow and maneuvering around you. They also have more difficulty making abrupt stops.
- Check the local running tracks to see if they may be a good outdoor or indoor alternative to the sidewalks or streets in poor weather.
- Plan for refuges along the way - is there a store, park restroom, or other place you can duck into to warm up during your walk if needed?
- Consider mall walking or treadmill walking as a cold-weather alternative.
- To prevent slipping and sliding, consider using walking/trekking poles for extra stability. Also, be sure not to wear slick soled shoes [you may consider purchasing slip-on cleats for icy conditions].
- Dress appropriately in layers:
 - **Next to the skin:** Your base layer should wick sweat away from your body to keep your skin dry. Cotton should not be used - save your t-shirts for other purposes.
 - **Insulating layer:** This layer will keep you warm and can be shed once you warm up. Wool, fleece, pile, down in a jacket, shirt or vest.
 - **Outer layer:** To protect you from the elements, a windproof and water resistant jacket. It should be worn loosely.
 - **Pants:** If the weather is frigid, long underwear bottoms or tights underneath another pair of pants will keep you warm. Cotton and denim should be avoided. Running pants or running tights made of synthetics that wick moisture will keep you more comfortable in rain and snow.
 - **Socks:** Switch to heavier socks or wear two pairs for more insulation. Test your socks with your chosen shoes to make sure there is still room for your toes to wiggle.
 - **Shoes/Boots:** If your walking is wet or snowy, invest in a pair of waterproof walking or hiking shoes.
 - **A Change of Clothes:** If your walking route is away from home, bring along a set of warm and dry clothes to slip into immediately after.
 - **Accessories:** A hat to keep body heat from escaping, an ear band for those whose ears get cold, mittens (which will keep your hands the warmest as the fingers work together to build up warmth), and a scarf (or similar item) to comfort you through brutal winds.



Source: *Safe Winter Walking Tips* adapted from <http://walking.about.com>