






## A Walk A Day

The popularity of walking as a fitness activity is growing by leaps and bounds. Low risk and easy to start, walking has proved its health benefits in numerous studies.

An eight-year study of 13,000 people found that those who walked 30 minutes a day had a significantly lower risk of premature death than those who rarely exercised.

A regular walking program can help:

-  Reduce blood cholesterol
-  Lower blood pressure
-  Increase cardiovascular endurance
-  Boost bone strength
-  Burn calories and keep weight down

### GET READY!

A walking program is simple to start. All you need are comfortable clothes and shoes. Layer loose clothing, keeping in mind that exercise elevates the body's temperature. Shoes specifically designed for walking are best.

Every workout should begin with a brief warm-up and a few simple stretches. Walk around the house or in place for a few minutes to get the blood flowing to the muscles before you attempt to stretch them. Although walking primarily works the major muscles of the legs, don't forget to stretch your back, shoulders and arms. This will

help to loosen up any tension you may be carrying and make your walk more enjoyable as well as more effective.

### GET MOVING!

Beginning walkers can make their workouts less strenuous by limiting how fast and far they walk. Keep in mind the following:

- 1** Walk short distances  
Begin with a five-minute stroll and gradually increase your distance.
- 2** Forget about speed  
Walk at a comfortable pace. Focus on good posture, keeping your head lifted and shoulders relaxed.
- 3** Swing your arms naturally  
Breathe deeply. If you can't catch your breath, slow down or avoid hills.
- 4** Be sure you can talk while walking. If you can't converse, you are walking too fast.



### GET FIT!

Walking is one fitness activity that allows you numerous options. Once you have reached a point where you can walk a few miles with relative ease, you can start to vary the intensity.

Walking hills, in addition to increasing your cardiovascular endurance, is a great way to tone the legs. Concentrate on lengthening your stride or increasing your speed. And don't forget to reward yourself after each workout with a few minutes of relaxing stretches to help prevent sore muscles.

Listening to lively music while you walk is also a great way to energize your workout. But if you wear headphones, keep the volume down and watch out for traffic that you may not hear.

Keep track of your progress. Many experts recommend that you walk a minimum of 20 minutes a day. But there are no hard and fast rules. Fit walking into your schedule whenever you can. That may mean two 10-minute walks each day, or even hour-long walks two to three times a week. The best schedule is one that keeps you walking and keeps you fit!

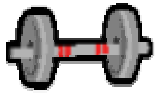
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## Monitoring Exercise Intensity Using Heart Rate

### WHY MONITOR YOUR HEART RATE?

You're huffing and puffing through another aerobic workout, wondering if you're really doing yourself any good. Are you working too hard or not hard enough?

You look around. The person next to you has barely broken a sweat while the one in front is drenched from head to toe. Well, sweat may not be the best indicator of exercise intensity. For that, we need to look to our hearts.

Heart rates, to be exact. When you exercise, your heart beats faster to meet the demand for more blood and oxygen by the muscles of the body. The more intense the activity, the faster your heart will beat. Therefore, monitoring your heart rate during exercise can be an excellent way to monitor exercise intensity.

For the majority of aerobic enthusiasts, there is a range of exercise intensities that is described as safe and effective for promoting cardiovascular benefits. To determine what range is best for you, you'll need to be familiar with a few terms.

**1** Maximal heart rate: This number is related to your age. As we grow older, our hearts start to beat a little more slowly. To estimate your maximal heart rate, simply subtract your age from the number 220.

**2** Target heart-rate zone: This is the number of beats per minute (bpm) at which your heart should be beating during aerobic exercise. For most healthy individuals, this range is 50 to 80 percent of your maximal heart rate. So, if your maximal heart rate is 180 bpm, the low end of the range (50 percent) would be 90 bpm, and the high end of the range (80 percent) would be 144 bpm.

### WHAT DOES THIS RECOMMENDED HEART-RATE RANGE MEAN?

Now that you've determined your target heart-rate zone, you need to know how to put that information to good use. These numbers serve as a guideline - an indicator of how hard you should be exercising.

Those just beginning an aerobic program should probably aim for the low end of the zone and pick up the intensity

as they become more comfortable with their workouts. Those who are more fit, or are training for competitive events, may want to aim for the higher end of the zone.

### CALCULATE YOUR HEART RATE BY AGE

Age:	20	30	40	50	60	70
50%	100	95	90	85	80	75
80%	160	152	144	136	128	120

Keep in mind that the target heart-rate zone is recommended for individuals without any health problems. Additionally, individuals taking medication that alter the heart rate should consult their physician for recommended exercise intensity.

### WHERE TO MONITOR?

There are a number of "sites" used to monitor the pulse rate. Two convenient sites to use are the radial pulse at the base of the thumb of either hand, or the carotid pulse at the side of the neck.

Accurate pulse-count assessment is crucial when monitoring exercise intensity. By using the first two fingers of one hand and locating the artery, a pulse rate can be easily determined.

Immediately after exercise, isolate your pulse and count the number of beats in a 10-second period. To determine the heart rate in beats per minute, multiply the number of beats per 10 seconds by six. For instance, if a 10-second pulse count were 20, then the heart rate would be 120 bpm.

### A final word about heart-rate monitoring

Remember, your estimated target heart-rate zone is just that - an estimate. If you feel like you are exercising too hard, you probably are. The best advice is to reduce your intensity and find a heart-rate range that works for you.

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