



Specialized care. Personal touch.

Get Walking

Walking is a great fitness activity for individuals of all ages. Aside from being low risk and easy to begin, walking can be done almost anywhere and offers many health benefits. The mall is an excellent place to walk year round because you are sheltered from the weather and can access the facility at times most convenient to you.

A walking program that includes four to six sessions per week can help:

- Lower blood pressure
- Improve cardiovascular endurance
- Reduce blood cholesterol levels
- Boost bone strength
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Reduce your risk of stroke
- Elevate overall mood and outlook
- Improve sleep
- Lower stress levels
- Lower your risk of developing diabetes
- Relieve arthritis and back pain

Getting Started

Beginning a walking program is simple. All that is required are comfortable shoes and clothes. Layering your clothing is best as your body temperature may rise during the walking session.

Before you hit the pavement, visit with your health care provider about your plans to begin an exercise program. Once cleared to start, lace up your shoes and begin each session with a light warm-up.

The warm-up is intended to prepare the body for more vigorous activity and reduce the risk of injury during the session. Try walking at a mild pace for 3-5 minutes to elevate the body temperature and get the blood flowing to the exercising muscles.

Walk Your Way To Health

If you are new to mall walking, go easy until you can determine how your body tolerates the activity. Make your walking session less strenuous by limiting how fast and how far you walk.

Consider beginning with a 3-5 minute warm-up followed by 5-10 minutes of fitness walking. Then gradually increase your time by 1-3 minutes each week, as tolerated. Health professionals recommend aiming for 30 minutes of moderate activity each day, however, you are wise to gradually build up to this goal.

Good walking posture is important. Relax your shoulders, stand tall, and stay focused on what's ahead of you rather than on the floor below you.

Swing your arms naturally next to your body and be sure that you can talk while walking. If you cannot visit with your walking partner comfortably then you are walking too fast and it's time to slow down the pace.

Take time out for water breaks to stay properly hydrated and end each walking session with a cool down.

Wrapping It Up

The cool down should include 3-5 minutes of slower walking followed by lower body stretches. Hold each stretch for 20-60 seconds and repeat each stretch 2-3 times on each side of the body.

Aside from being a relaxing and calming activity to conclude your session, stretching also improves your flexibility making it easier to perform everyday activities like reaching for an article of clothing on a high shelf or bending over to tie your shoes. Although easy to omit, stretching is a wonderful way to end your activity session and offers numerous benefits.

Happy Walking!