



Want to exercise more but don't know where to start?

Exercise doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. It can be as basic as going for a walk. All you need to do is take the first step!

For a short video on this topic, click [here](#) or use this link: canadalife.com/video-walking

How to get started on a walking program

Regular exercise is important to your well-being in many ways. It helps keep your body strong, boost your immune system, stabilize your mood and reduce your stress. It can also help you recover from an illness or injury.

Take a moment to think about what exercise can do for you:

- What benefits do you think you can get from exercise?
- If you exercise more, how will that make you feel?
- What will you be able to do more often, longer, or do better?



Here are some tips to help you start exercising and stay motivated.

Start exercising and stay motivated

Set a goal

Most adults would benefit from about two and a half hours of brisk walking per week. Although this can be your end goal, it can take time to build up to it depending on your current physical condition, activity level and motivation.

Decide how many times a week you will go for walks, and how to fit the walks into your schedule. Then set yourself a realistic goal for the first week and increase your goals as you go.

For example, you could start with 10-minute walks, three days a week, after lunch. After a couple of weeks, you could increase to 15-minute walks, or walk four times a week and so on.

Once you feel comfortable walking regularly, try increasing the intensity, speed or distance of your walks.

Here are some ways you can do that:

- Measure your distance using a GPS app or device and plan to increase your distance by 10%.
- Walk as fast as you can for one minute, then go back to your usual pace for two.
- Add stairs or hills to your route.
- Replace one or two walks with sessions of cardiovascular training such as an aerobic group workout, uphill hiking, snowshoeing, swimming, jogging, etc.

Get ready!

Here are some things you may find useful as you start on your program:

- Comfortable running or walking shoes
- Backpack or waist bag
- Wind- and water-resistant jacket and pants
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat
- Water bottle
- Walking poles
- Headlamp and reflective gear for walking in the dark

In winter, consider these:

- Water-resistant winter running shoes or boots
- Lightweight breathable winter jacket
- Warm fleece or wool sweater
- Thermal underwear
- Ice cleats
- Warm hat, neck-warmer, mitts or gloves

Start exercising and stay motivated

Stay motivated

Here are some tips to help you keep moving:

- Include more walking in your daily activities: add more walks in your commute, walk to the store, park farther from your destination and walk the rest of the distance.
- Try walking with a friend or bring your dog with you.
- Listen to music, podcasts or audiobooks.
- Join a walking club.
- Subscribe to a social media group for walkers and hikers.
- Explore a new trail, a park or neighbourhood.
- Walk inside a mall or on a treadmill if the weather is bad.
- Use a pedometer or activity bracelet to count your steps.
- Celebrate your achievements!

And...

If you feel pain or discomfort when walking or after you walk, talk to your health care provider or physical therapist. They may be able to help you.

If you miss a few walking sessions or have to stop for a while, don't worry, just start again at a slower pace.

It's your move!



Walking log

Instructions

- You can print the walking log and fill in a paper copy.
- To fill electronically, save a copy on your computer. Use the Tab key to navigate from one cell to another.

For the week of _____

Goal _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Minutes spent walking or exercising							
Comments Intensity, distance, speed, etc.							

Walking log

For the week of _____

Goal _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Minutes spent walking or exercising							
Comments Intensity, distance, speed, etc.							