

Handout 11

Tips for walking

Safety

- ◆ Talk to your health care provider before starting any new physical activity program if you have a health concern, are taking medications, or have been inactive for a while.
- ◆ Start out at a slow, easy pace for the first 5 minutes for each walking session to warm up. Slow down again for 5 minutes at the end of your walk to ‘cool down’.
- ◆ Don’t overdo it. Walk distances you feel comfortable with.
- ◆ Go at your own pace. If you are having any difficulty, slow down.
- ◆ Stop if you feel any nausea, chest pain, shortness of breath or pain in your joints. If necessary, get medical attention.
- ◆ Carry identification with you.
- ◆ Walk in places that are safe. Avoid walkways that are icy, cracked or that have poor lighting.
- ◆ During very hot or very cold weather, walk indoors where the temperature is more comfortable.
- ◆ In hot weather, avoid walking in the heat of the day. Mornings and evenings may be cooler.
- ◆ If walking alone, let a friend, family member or neighbour know where you are. Leave a map of your route on the fridge and a note to say you have gone walking.



Walking technique

- ◆ Walk at your own pace.
- ◆ If you can walk and talk easily—that’s probably a good pace. If you can walk and sing a song easily—it may be too slow. If you can’t walk and talk without gasping, you’re going too fast.

- ◆ Keep your hands loose and comfortable. Avoid clenching your fists.
- ◆ Walk with an ordinary stride. Avoid taking longer steps to increase your speed.

Shoes

- ◆ Wear a good pair of sturdy and comfortable walking shoes.
- ◆ Check with local shoe stores and your health care provider for more information about proper footwear for walking.



Winter Clothing

- ◆ Dress in layers for warmth and comfort. Walking can increase your body temperature no matter what the weather. A hat and scarf can help you stay warm.
- ◆ If you are going for long walks: polypropylene underwear and wool provide warmth and take sweat away from your skin. This helps to avoid getting chilled.
- ◆ Wear shoes/boots that are safe and comfortable for walking in snow.
- ◆ Buy 'ice grippers' for your boots.
- ◆ Ski poles and walking sticks can provide extra grip and balance.



Summer Clothing

- ◆ Cotton clothes that are lightweight and light coloured provide comfort and protection from heat and the sun.
- ◆ Protect yourself from the sun. Wear hats, sunglasses and sun-screen.
- ◆ Take plenty of water to drink when the weather is warm.

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