

Cold Weather Walking

Walking is one of the simplest and safest aerobic exercises you can do. It will help strengthen your bones, control your weight, and condition your heart and lungs. Being consistent in your walking exercise routine is one of the most important factors in developing a healthy physical activity program. Don't let the cooler weather keep you from walking.

Quick facts about walking:

- ✚ Walking is the most popular physical activity in the U.S.
- ✚ Walking reduces the risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes and heart disease.
- ✚ Walking an extra 20 minutes each day will burn off 7 pounds of body fat per year.
- ✚ To burn off 1 plain M&M candy, you need to walk the full length of a football field.
Think about that the next time you dip your hand into a candy bowl.

Walking is the single most effective, cost efficient exercise you can do. Walking programs require only a modest investment, promote physical and mental health and aid in long lasting weight management. The health benefits include protection against heart attack and stroke, a reduced risk of diabetes, a lower overall mortality, a decreased risk for heart disease, and enhanced fitness that helps to maintain a healthy body mass index.

Walking in the winter can be very enjoyable if you protect yourself from the weather and use common sense on when and where to walk. Try and plan walks during daylight hours on routes with flat sidewalks. If you are choosing to walk at night make sure the route is well lit. Walk into the wind as you start and return with your back to the wind.

Cold weather recommended clothing starts with layers of light clothing. Layers trap heat and can be easily removed as your body warms up. The outer layer should block the wind. Make sure the shoes have a good grip and avoid a too tight or too loose fit. A hat, scarf and gloves are essential on wintry days. Even though it may be cold outside don't forget to drink plenty of water.

Shivering elevates blood pressure. If the temperature is 20-40 degrees, wear a scarf that covers nose and mouth. When the weather makes it difficult to be outside, consider mall walking, or look for an indoor track in the area.

Variety is the spice of life. Schedule monthly walks outside of your community that could include brisk winter walks at farms, gardens, nature trails and beaches or try an indoor walk at a museum or at a local university. Remember to keep moving!

For more information about walking contact:

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