

Building a Walking Workout

Are you looking for a risk-free, anti-pain treatment? Maybe you also want a way to reduce pain, stiffness and inflammation from arthritis or other conditions without any side effects? How about a foolproof method for losing weight and staying fit that doesn't cost a dime? A walking workout does it all. Walking for 30 to 60 minutes every day can bring you all sorts of health benefits, from keeping your heart in good shape to making sure your bones stay strong. Using smart strategies like the FIT formula will help you start or keep a walking routine on track. But don't worry, you can slowly build up to that amount and you don't have to walk for 30 to 60 minutes all at once. Breaking it up into three to six 10-minute walks counts, too.



Walking Routine Considerations

Walking is one of the most important things you can do if you have arthritis. It helps you lose weight or maintain the proper weight. That, in turn, lessens stress on joints and improves arthritis symptoms. Walking is simple, free, and almost everyone can do it.

How far and fast should you be walking? Well, any amount is better than none. And as always, it's best to check with your doctor or physical therapist before starting a walking workout plan.

The FIT Formula for Walking

When you walk, think about the FIT formula – Frequency (how often), Intensity (how fast), and Time (how long). When you walk or start any new physical activity, start at a low level, and increase slowly over time. Trying to do too much too fast can lead to injuries that set you back instead of moving you forward. When you're ready to increase your activity, change just one part of the FIT formula at a time.

Frequency: Go for a walk every day, if you can, but make sure you walk at least three to five times per week. If you're just starting out and can only tolerate a five-minute walk, then start by walking just five minutes a day two or three days per week.

Intensity: Aim for moderate intensity – covering two to three miles in an hour – but don't worry if you can't do that right out of the door. Build up to walking success. Your heart and breathing rate should be faster, but you should still be able carry on a conversation as you walk.

Time: Shoot for 30 minutes to an hour a day as your ultimate goal. If you're just starting out, even five-minute walks three times a day will help you build strong bones and muscles, be more limber, and have less pain. Gradually increase your time until you reach your goal.

Counting Steps While Walking

Counting steps also can be a great way to make walking part of your everyday routine. Aim for 6,000 steps per day, and keep in mind most of us already walk 3,000 to 5,000 steps per day just doing our normal activities. Remember, it's OK to slowly build up the number of steps you take.

If you're just getting off the couch, try a walking program like the Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease, and before you know it, you'll be miles down the road toward walking success and a healthier you. If you have been hitting the sidewalks for years, you already know and feel the benefits of walking. Keep it up!

Source: Arthritis Foundation ([Arthritis@Work](https://www.arthritis.org/health-wellness/fitness/exercise/arthritis-work))