Walk for Better Health
Getting Started

Why Should I Walk for Better Health?
People of all ages, races, genders and fitness levels should be physically active most days of the week*. Walking is a great, low impact way to be more active every day. Whether you are already exercising or just getting started, fitting more walking into your daily routine will pay off with huge health benefits.

Benefits of Walking

• Helps to manage your weight
• Lowers your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar
• Makes you feel good
• Raises your energy level
• Tones your muscles
• Helps you sleep and relax
• Helps to control your appetite

* For most people, beginning a light, low intensity workout program is safe. However, if you are new to exercising, have been inactive for an extended period of time, have any medical issues or are looking to start an intense exercise program, you should speak to your doctor first.
Stepping Up
On average, 2,000 steps is equal to one mile. A good goal for most people is at least 10,000 steps per day, or five miles. Many of us are not yet at that level. By increasing the number of steps walked each day and week, you should be able to reach 10,000 steps a day.

Using a Pedometer
When using a clip-on pedometer to track your steps, be sure to position it correctly on your body to get the best results.

1. Attach the pedometer to the waistband or belt of your clothing.
2. Make sure it fits snugly against your body.
3. The pedometer should line up with the crease of your pants or knee cap.

Remember to put on your pedometer first thing every morning and take it off before going to bed. Record your steps every evening and set your pedometer to zero when you put it on in the morning.

If you find yourself walking without a pedometer, or if you are planning on tracking miles or kilometers as well as steps, use the chart to convert steps, miles, kilometers and minutes.

### Walking Reference Table

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Quicktip:
*Pedometers and how to use them can vary depending on the manufacturer. Always read the instructions before using a new pedometer.*
Keeping Records
The goal of keeping records is to increase the total amount of walking you are able to do from week to week. *Walk for Better Health* is a tool kit to help get you started. Use this book to track your steps. We recommend that you track your progress for 6 to 8 weeks. The final page of this book can be removed and copied so you can continue tracking your steps.

Tracking the steps you routinely take every day will give you an idea of what you are doing right now. The goal of the *Walk for Better Health* tool kit is to help you get started and to increase the number of steps you take each day.

Setting Goals
Start recording your steps the first day, and by the end of the first week you will have a baseline number of steps to use as you set goals for the coming weeks. An achievable goal for most people is to increase their average daily steps by 10 percent at the end of each week to work up to or beyond 10,000 steps per day. For example, if your average daily steps in the first week are 5,000 steps per day, a possible daily goal for the second week would be an average of 5,500 steps per day. If you are struggling to increase the number of steps you take each day, try adding steps to what you do already, like:

- Park farther from your destination
- Walk your dog
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Go for a walk each morning or at night after dinner

**Set SMART Goals to Become More Active**

**S**pecific- know what you have to do each day to reach your goal

**M**easurable- track your progress as you strive to meet your goal

**A**chievable- don’t be afraid to push yourself, but set a goal you can reach

**R**ealistic- think about your strengths and weaknesses when setting the goal

**T**ime frame- have a defined start and end date for your goal

Here is an example of a SMART goal: *This week I will walk for 20 minutes per day, during my lunch hour.*

My goal for this week is ____________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

Set SMART Goals to Become More Active
Finding Footwear
A successful walk starts with your feet. Shoes protect and cushion your feet while you walk, so choose your footwear wisely.

- Shop for new shoes later in the day when your feet have had a chance to swell slightly and always try them on with athletic socks.
- Shoes should be made of leather or a breathable material.
- Be sure the shoe fits well. A shoe that is too small or too large can cause blisters and cramping.

Hydration
When you sweat, your body loses some of its precious water. When you don’t drink enough water you may get a headache, muscle cramps and heat-related illnesses. Be sure to have access to water throughout your walk, no matter the season.

Quicktip:
Most sports drinks are high in sugar, calories and cost. Reusable water bottles save money and are better for the environment.

Dress for Success and Safety
Wear clothing that is comfortable and made of breathable fabric. Once your body starts moving, you will warm up so dress accordingly. When walking outdoors, dress to be seen by wearing light colored clothing or reflectors. Remember to carry ID and be aware of your surroundings. It’s also a good idea to carry a cell phone in case of an emergency.

Walking Year ‘Round
Too warm or too cold outside? Remember—the weather is always perfect at the local shopping mall. See page 26 of this book for information about walking at area malls.

The following tips will keep you walking in all seasons.

- **Winter** – Dress in layers to keep your body warm and dry. Don’t forget to protect your hands, feet and head from the elements. Wear shoes or boots with good grips. Be cautious of snow and ice and walk at a slower pace to help prevent falls. Remember, if the weather looks too challenging you can always walk indoors at a local mall, or check out a neighborhood school or recreation center for open walking hours.

- **Spring** – Start out slow if you haven’t done much walking all winter. Dress in layers and be prepared for spring showers – a brimmed hat or umbrella may come in handy.

- **Summer** – Stay hydrated and don’t forget to protect yourself from the sun by wearing a hat and sunscreen with at least SPF 15. Consider adjusting your walking time to the early morning or evening to avoid the hottest part of the day. To protect against heat-related illness, drink plenty of water and take regular breaks, preferably in the shade.

- **Fall** – Even when the air is crisp, you’ll warm up quickly once you start walking, so continue to dress in layers. Remember that the days are shorter so you may need to adjust your walking schedule to avoid darkness. A flashlight may come in handy.
Quicktip:
Challenge yourself and find a 5K (or 10K) Walk or Run that will happen later in the season. Your daily walks will help you train for the big event!

Online Tools
The American Heart Association (AHA) has a variety of online tools to help you stay motivated and record your progress. Go to www.startwalkingnow.org to find:

- Local walking clubs
- An online activity tracker
- A program to help you set up a walking route
- A social network for walkers, and more!

The AHA also has a FREE Walking Paths app for your smartphone. Scan the iPhone or Android QR codes below to access the AHA Walking Paths App.

Other Tips
- Vary your route – a change of scenery can keep you from getting bored
- Reward yourself when you reach certain goals or milestones
- Upload your favorite playlist and move to the music
- Focus on how good exercise makes you feel, and remember that feeling when you are tempted to skip a walk

Staying Motivated

Find a Partner or Group
Many people find extra motivation and accountability when they walk with others. Try to find at least one other person that you can walk with on a regular basis. If you work outside the home, start a walking group at your workplace or try having a walking meeting. If you don’t work outside the home, try starting a neighborhood walking group, or hold family meetings while you walk.

I will walk with: ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________

At this time: ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________

On these dates: __________________________________________

________________________________________________________
Stretching and Conditioning

Warm Up
Before setting out on a walk, it is important to stretch your muscles to prevent cramping and possible injury. Try these stretches to get your muscles warmed up for your walk:

**Single Leg Shoulder Press**
Standing on one leg, press your opposite arm toward the ceiling. Your stance hip should jut out sideways as you lower your arm and then straighten at the top of your press. Perform two sets of 12 repetitions.

**Walker’s Arms**
Stand with one foot in front of the other with knees unlocked and chest up tall. Draw in your belly button while you rapidly alternate forward and backward movement with the arms. Elbows should be bent at a 90º angle. Perform 20 backward movements on each arm then switch your stance so your other foot is in the front.

**Walking Knee Hugs**
Standing tall, walk forward while hugging one knee to your chest. Alternate knees with each step forward. Be sure your back stays straight and allow the foot on the floor to raise onto the toe. Perform 15 knee hugs on each leg.

**Sidelying Back Stretch**
Lying on your right side, bend your hips and knees to 90°. Place your right hand on top of your left leg to prevent your thighs from separating or sliding apart. Rotate your chest towards the ceiling while attempting to allow the left shoulder blade to come down to the floor. Inhale and exhale deeply. Hold for one minute. Repeat lying on left side.
Cool Down
When you are nearing the end of your walk, gradually reduce your speed and intensity. When you are finished walking, stretch your muscles one more time to reduce soreness and improve flexibility:

Warrior II
Stand with your feet wider than shoulder width apart and toes pointed straight ahead. Turn your right foot to the right, keeping your pelvis facing the front. Inhale as you raise your arms out to the sides and exhale as you lower your pelvis toward the floor by bending the right knee until it is positioned over the right foot. Press your feet apart as if you are trying to split the floor. Gaze over your right middle finger and take five deep breaths.

Triangle
Stand with your feet 3-4’ apart, toes pointed straight ahead, and arms out to a “T”. Keeping your belly facing forward, inhale and turn your right foot to the right. Exhale and bring your right hand towards the right big toe while the left hand points up towards the ceiling. Inhale and look up towards the ceiling. Take five deep breaths. Return to the starting position. Repeat on the left side.

Revolving Forward Bend
Spread legs wider than shoulder width placing your hands on hips. Keeping your back straight, hinge at the hips to bring torso forward to a 90° angle. With knees unlocked reach for the floor. Walk your hands to the right foot and bring your right hand up towards the ceiling while rotating your chest to the right. Hold for five deep breaths, then walk your hands to the left foot and repeat while lifting your left arm toward the ceiling.
Strengthening Exercises

Practice these exercises to increase muscle strength and stamina:

Squat with Forward Reach
Standing with your feet just wider than shoulder width apart and chest up tall, squat by sticking your butt back and keeping your chest up. At the bottom of your squat reach forward with both hands. You should feel this in your butt and backs of legs. Perform two sets of 10 repetitions.

Rapid Reaching
Pick an object about five inches off the floor. Standing on one leg, let your torso fall forward by hinging at the hip. Be sure to hold your back in a straight position. Alternate reaching rapidly with the right then left arm while maintaining this position. Perform two sets of 12 touches with each hand.

Downward Dog
Get on all fours (hands and knees). With your shoulders over your hands and back straight curl the toes under while lifting the hips up and back as you straighten the legs. Breathe in the pose while allowing your head to hang in a relaxed position and attempting to bring the heels to the floor. Hold for 30 seconds before returning to hands and knees. Perform three times.
High Plank
Assume the top of a push up position, making sure your hands are directly under your shoulders and legs are hip width apart. Draw in your belly button and hold your back in a straight position. Hold this position for three sets of 30 second holds. Work up to holding this plank for 60 seconds.

Super Hero
Get on all fours (hands and knees). Your hands should be directly below your shoulders and knees hip width apart. Extend your left arm out front and right leg behind you. Hold this position for 20 seconds, then switch to left arm out front and right leg behind you, hold for 20 seconds. Repeat five times on each side.
Tracking Your Steps

Tracking your steps every day will help you to identify your current activity level and set goals for the future. Each page in this log has room for you to track your weekly steps. Track each day on a new line. Then calculate your weekly total at the bottom of each page.

Your Goals
Use your total steps at the end of your first week to set your goal for your second week. A good goal is to increase your weekly steps by 10 percent until you are walking 10,000 steps per day or more.

Don’t Stop There
Continue to track your progress for several weeks. The last page of this book can be removed and copied so you can continue to track your progress. Many people feel motivated when they see their progress week to week.

### Week 1

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Weekly Total
(add daily totals together to get weekly total)

- [ ] I met my weekly steps goal
- [ ] I did not meet my weekly steps goal
### Week 2

**Daily Steps Goal:** _______________________

**Weekly Steps Goal:** _______________________

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**Weekly Total**

- [ ] I met my weekly steps goal
- [ ] I did not meet my weekly steps goal

### Week 3

**Daily Steps Goal:** _______________________

**Weekly Steps Goal:** _______________________

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**Weekly Total**

- [ ] I met my weekly steps goal
- [ ] I did not meet my weekly steps goal
Week 4

Daily Steps Goal: _______________________

Weekly Steps Goal: ____________________

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<td>Weekly Total (add daily totals together to get weekly total)</td>
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☐ I met my weekly steps goal

☐ I did not meet my weekly steps goal

Week 5

Daily Steps Goal: _______________________

Weekly Steps Goal: ____________________

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☐ I met my weekly steps goal

☐ I did not meet my weekly steps goal
### Week 6

**Daily Steps Goal:** ____________________________

**Weekly Steps Goal:** __________________________

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**Weekly Total**

(Add daily totals together to get weekly total)

- [ ] I met my weekly steps goal
- [ ] I did not meet my weekly steps goal

### Week 7

**Daily Steps Goal:** ____________________________

**Weekly Steps Goal:** __________________________

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**Weekly Total**

(Add daily totals together to get weekly total)

- [ ] I met my weekly steps goal
- [ ] I did not meet my weekly steps goal
Week 8

Daily Steps Goal: ____________________________
Weekly Steps Goal: __________________________

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<td>8 Week Total</td>
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I walked ________________ steps in the last 8 weeks!

- I met the personal goal I set for myself.
  I will continue to walk and exercise, this is my plan:

- I did not meet the personal goal I set for myself.
  I will continue to strive to meet my goal by:
Mall Walking Information

Your local shopping mall can be a safe, climate controlled and easily accessible place to walk. Most shopping malls are open early for walkers. The hours listed in this guide reflect only walking hours, not shopping hours. Many malls have walking clubs or organized walking groups. To find out more about a specific mall, use the contact information listed in this book.

Briarwood Mall
Location: 100 Briarwood Circle, Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 8 a.m., Sunday at 9 a.m.
Distance: One lap is nearly one mile
Phone: (734) 769-9610
Website: shopbriarwood.com

Courtland Center
Location: 4190 E. Court Street, Burton, MI 48509
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 8 a.m., Sunday at 10 a.m.
Distance: One lap is 0.6 mile
Phone: (810) 744-0742
Website: courtlandcenter.com

Eastland Mall
Location: 18000 Vernier Road, Harper Woods, MI 48225
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 8 a.m., Sunday at 11 a.m.
Distance: One lap is one mile
Phone: (313) 371-1500
Website: shopeastland.com

Fairlane Town Center
Location: 18900 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, MI 48126
Walking hours begin: Daily at 7 a.m.
Distance: One lap of the lower level is 0.8 miles
Phone: (313) 593-3330
Website: shopfairlane.com

Fashion Square Mall
Location: 4787 Fashion Square Mall, Saginaw, MI 48604
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 8 a.m., Sunday at 10 a.m.
Distance: One lap is nearly one mile
Phone: (989) 793-6401
Website: shopfashionsquaremall.com

Genesee Valley Center
Location: 3341 S. Linden Road, Flint, MI 48507
Walking hours begin: Daily at 8 a.m.
Distance: One lap is one mile
Phone: (810) 732-4000
Website: geneseemall.com
Great Lakes Crossing
Location: 4000 Baldwin Road, Auburn Hills, MI 48326
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 7 a.m.,
Sunday at 8 a.m.
Distance: One lap is just over one mile
Phone: (248) 454-5000
Website: shopgreatlakescrossing.com

Lakeside Mall
Location: 14000 Lakeside Circle, Sterling Hgts, MI 48313
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 8 a.m.,
Sunday at 9 a.m.
Distance: One lap of the upper level is one mile
          One lap of the lower level is 0.75 miles
Phone: (586) 247-4131
Website: shop-lakesidemall.com

Laurel Park Place
Location: 37700 W. 6 Mile Road, Livonia, MI 48152
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 6 a.m.,
Sunday at 9 a.m.
Distance: One lap is 0.6 miles
Phone: (734) 426-1100
Website: laurelparkplace.com

Macomb Mall
Location: 32233 Gratiot Avenue, Roseville, MI 48066
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 8 a.m.,
Sunday at 11 a.m.
Distance: One lap is 0.8 mile
Phone: (586) 293-7800
Website: shopmacombmall.com

Northland Mall
Location: 21500 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield, MI 48075
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 8 a.m.,
Sunday at 10 a.m.
Distance: One lap is one mile
Phone: (248) 569-6272
Website: shopatnorthland.com

Oakland Mall
Location: 412 W. 14 Mile Road, Troy, MI 48033
Walking hours begin: Monday - Saturday at 7 a.m.,
Sunday at 8 a.m.
Distance: One lap of the upper or lower level is 0.2 miles
          One lap of the main level is 0.6 miles
          One lap of each level is one mile
Phone: (248) 585-6000
Website: oaklandmall.com
**The Mall at Partridge Creek**
*Location:* 17420 Hall Road, Clinton Township, MI 48038  
*Walking hours begin:* This is an outdoor mall, walkers are encouraged to walk during shopping hours.  
Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
*Distance:* The outdoor walking path is nearly one mile  
*Phone:* (586) 226-0330  
*Website:* shoppartridgecreek.com

**Somerset Collection**
*Location:* 2800 W. Big Beaver Road, Troy, MI 48084  
*Walking hours begin:* Daily at 7 a.m.  
*Distance:* One lap of any north level is 0.3 miles  
One lap of any south level is about 0.25 miles  
The skywalk is 0.125 miles  
*Phone:* (248) 643-6360  
*Website:* thesomersetcollection.com

**Southland Mall**
*Location:* 23000 Eureka Road, Taylor, MI 48180  
*Walking hours begin:* Monday - Saturday at 7:30 a.m., Sunday at 9 a.m.  
*Distance:* One lap is nearly one mile  
*Phone:* (734) 374-2800  
*Website:* shopsouthlandcenter.com

**Twelve Oaks Mall**
*Location:* 27500 Novi Road, Novi, MI 48377  
*Walking hours begin:* Monday - Saturday at 8 a.m., Sunday at 9 a.m.  
*Distance:* The upper and lower levels are each approximately 0.7 miles  
*Phone:* (248) 348-9400  
*Website:* shoptwelveoaks.com

**The Village of Rochester Hills**
*Location:* 104 N. Adams Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48309  
*Walking hours begin:* This is an outdoor mall, walkers are encouraged to walk during shopping hours.  
Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., Sunday noon - 6 p.m.  
*Distance:* The outdoor walking path is one mile  
*Phone:* (248) 375-9451  
*Website:* villageofrochesterhills.com

**Westland Mall**
*Location:* 35000 W. Warren, Westland, MI 48185  
*Walking hours begin:* Monday - Saturday at 7 a.m., Sunday at 9 a.m.  
*Distance:* One lap is 0.75 miles  
*Phone:* (734) 425-5001  
*Website:* westlandcenter.com
### Tracking Your Steps

**Week _____**

- **Daily Steps Goal:** ____________________________

- **Weekly Steps Goal:** ____________________________

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<th>Day/Date</th>
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- [ ] I met my weekly steps goal
- [ ] I did not meet my weekly steps goal
## Tracking Your Steps

**Week _____**

Daily Steps Goal: ______________________

Weekly Steps Goal: ______________________

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- I met my weekly steps goal
- I did not meet my weekly steps goal