

Weekly Wellness Tip

The Basics of Walking

If there's one thing our bodies were meant to do, it's walk. When it comes to fitness, walking offers an easy, safe, and inexpensive way to get in shape. What's more, there is little risk of injury from walking, most people can do it, and it can be done practically anywhere. However, don't start any exercise program – even walking – without first checking with your doctor.

Advantages

Walking is the only exercise that continues to be popular with people as they grow older. In a national survey, the highest percentage of regular walkers (39 percent) for any group was found among men 65 years and older. Often dismissed as being “too easy” to be taken seriously, walking has earned new respect as a means of improving physical fitness. Studies show when done briskly on a regular schedule, walking can:

- improve the body's ability to consume oxygen during exertion
- lower the resting heart rate
- assist in weight control
- reduce blood pressure
- increase the efficiency of the heart and lungs
- improve muscle tone
- relieve stress



How many calories does walking burn?

According to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, walking burns about the same amount of calories per mile as does running. Brisk walking for one mile burns just about the same number of calories as jogging an equal distance.

Not only is walking aerobic, but it also burns calories and fat. Regular, brisk walks exercise the whole body. In fact, throughout a year, four 45-minute walks per week can contribute up to 18 pounds of weight loss – perhaps even more if you combine your walking routine with changes in your diet. Because obesity and high blood pressure are among the leading risk factors for heart attack and stroke, walking offers some protection in reducing the risk of developing these two major killers in the United States.

Walking gear

All you need is a proper pair of shoes, comfortable clothing and some time. Whatever kind of shoe you select, it should have arch supports and a ½ to ¾ inch heel. Choose a shoe with uppers made of materials that “breathe,” such as leather or nylon mesh.

Source: UnitedHealthcare

For more information regarding the TeamHealth Wellness Program,
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