

A photograph of two women walking on a dirt path in a hilly, grassy area. The woman on the left is wearing a yellow tank top and black shorts, and the woman on the right is wearing a pink tank top and black shorts. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows rolling hills and a clear sky.

The Many Benefits of Walking

Walking is such a great and simple way to get started with exercise. No special equipment is needed. All you need is a decent pair of shoes and a bit of motivation to get started today. And you can walk anywhere at any time—no matter what your fitness level may be.

The ancient Greek doctor Hippocrates said walking is “man’s best medicine.” Today, doctors still value walking as a way to improve the health of both your body and mind. Adding walking into your daily routine can lead to noticeable improvements in both your physical and mental health. Here are a few good reasons to start.

Heart healthy

Walking is an excellent cardiovascular workout. It helps strengthen the heart and lower the risk of heart disease and stroke. Regular walking can lower bad cholesterol (LDL) levels and boost good cholesterol (HDL) levels. It also helps keep high blood pressure in check.

Weight-bearing exercise

Walking is a weight-bearing exercise. These types of exercise can help build and maintain strong bones. This plays a big role in preventing osteoporosis, a condition that affects bone density and strength. By improving bone health, walking can help cut down on your chance of fractures and injuries.

Weight management

Another great benefit of walking is its impact on weight control. A brisk, 30-minute walk can burn as much as 150 calories. Along with cutting calories by eating better, walking daily can likely lead to a drop in weight over time. Maintaining a healthy weight is one of the best things you can do for your overall health.

Mental health

Maintaining a consistent walking routine can also benefit mental health. Studies have shown that walking improves mood and reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety. Walking outdoors, in particular, can really boost these effects. Being out in the sunlight and nature may further improve mood and mental clarity.

Low-impact exercise

Walking is a great activity for people of all ages and fitness levels. If you have trouble with your joints, low-impact activities are the way to go. Several studies have found that walking can also help ease pain from arthritis. And other studies have suggested that a regular walking routine can help improve your joints. In turn, that may help you avoid arthritis.

Social connections

Walking can be a wonderful social activity. Walking with friends can combat loneliness and isolation. Being in a walking group or challenge builds community and support. This helps everyone stay motivated and committed to health goals.

Walking is a great way to boost both physical and mental health. Its advantages make it perfect for anyone wanting to enhance their well-being. Whether you’re taking on a walking challenge or just aiming to increase your daily steps, you’ll see significant health benefits.

If it’s been some time since you’ve been active, or if you have any sort of medical condition, be sure to talk with your doctor first before pushing yourself too hard with any sort of exercise routine.

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Access the Active&Fit Direct program through your employer, health plan, or association.

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*Add a spouse/domestic partner to a primary membership for additional monthly fees. Spouses/domestic partners must be 18 years or older. Fees will vary based on fitness center selection.

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