

How long should I walk?

A suggested programme for absolute beginners:

Weeks 1-2: walk 10 minutes every second week day and 10 minutes at the weekend.

Weeks 3-4: walk 15-20 minutes every second week day and 30 minutes at the weekend.

Weeks 4-5: walk 20-30 minutes most week days and 30 minutes at the weekend.

SPARC

Push Play is a nationwide SPARC campaign to get more people more active more often. The campaign aims to increase awareness about the benefits of regular, moderate, physical activity – and how easy it is to get active.

Push Play is based on the fact that even small amounts of activity give health benefits. The National Health Committee recommends just 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week.



Push Play says

- ▶ physical activity is fun
- ▶ it is easy to be active
- ▶ physical activity is good for everyone
- ▶ it is never too late to start being active
- ▶ any activity is better than none
- ▶ it doesn't have to be hard to be good for you

SPARC (Sport & Recreation NZ) is the public funding agency that encourages New Zealanders to enjoy healthy active lifestyles.

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For more information about activities in your area phone

0800 **ACTIVE** 0800 **22 84 83**

www.pushplay.org.nz



Walking

Getting started
on the active way
to health



Human beings were made to walk

It is the most basic of all physical activities. It is also convenient, enjoyable, safe and healthy. You can enjoy the sights, sounds and fresh air — and your need for fitness will take care of itself.

Walking is ideal for people who have been inactive or prefer less vigorous activity. It offers multiple health benefits. It is relatively easy on muscles and joints, and carries a low risk of injury.

Remember the Golden Rule of any physical activity. Go at your own pace, particularly at the beginning. With walking you can go as slow or as fast as you like - but a brisk pace produces better results.

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A gentle stroll

Whoever said the best things in life are free could easily have been a walker. Walking is fun, healthy and easy on your bank balance.

Your only investment need be a good pair of shock-absorbing shoes.

But don't hit the streets with too much passion! Start slowly and listen to your body. Cultivate the walking habit by establishing a routine. If you are a morning person, don't try walking every night after dinner. You won't last.

Physical activity will only become a habit if it's fun. If you like to socialise but don't have someone to walk with, join a walking group.

If you want to walk, do it. Start today. If you enjoy it, you can do it again tomorrow.

Picking up the pace

Brisk walking offers all the benefits of other forms of aerobic exercise - without the pain and risk of injury. It is an extremely effective cardiovascular workout and rivals running as a calorie burner.

Brisk walking is a skill sport. When you increase your speed, technique becomes more important — the correct arm swing, stride, breathing and posture will help your speed and efficiency.

If you are ready to break out of a stroll, it may be appropriate to take some technique classes. Ask about classes at your regional sports trust.

Just 30 minutes a day

Why take a walk?

Walking will assist:

- ▶ **Cardiovascular health** — increasing your heart rate and circulation through a more efficient intake of oxygen.
- ▶ **Muscular strength** — a tonic for the muscles! Muscles in many groups will be strengthened.
- ▶ **Healthy bones** — walk or you're chalk. A little regular activity will help prevent osteoporosis which causes brittle bones, especially in women.
- ▶ **Energy expenditure** — walk off your wobbles. You'll burn calories, add tone to your legs and help deflate that spare tyre.
- ▶ **Posture** — walking tall will help you maintain good posture. This is particularly important as you get older.
- ▶ **Relaxation** — ever noticed how hard it is to walk and worry at the same time? A brisk walk in the fresh air is a great way to unwind.
- ▶ **Social life** — talk while you walk. Make new friends and enjoy yourself while walking your way to better health. Join a walking group.
- ▶ **Local knowledge** — you don't have to be a trampler to drink in the beauty and tranquillity of our farmland and native bush. Our towns and cities are dotted with walkways and parks. Explore them!
- ▶ **Self-esteem** — you will get fitter, your body will be more toned and you will feel better about yourself. Isn't it worth it?



How to start

A step-by-step approach —

- ▶ **Make it a habit** — Pick a walking time that suits your lifestyle, your biorhythms and your schedule. You know the best time to walk.
- ▶ **Be flexible** — Be committed to walking but not obsessed. It's not the end of the world if you miss a walk — but don't let a day off ruin a good habit.
- ▶ **Avoid boredom** — When you start to get in a rut, change your route or your routine.
- ▶ **Walk tall** — Keep the body straight and let your arms and legs do the work. Stride naturally and let your arms swing gently to develop rhythm and help balance.
- ▶ **The air you breathe** — Breathe deeply and rhythmically. Try breathing in for four paces and out for four.
- ▶ **Challenge yourself** — Walk briskly for a minimum of 20 minutes. You deserve all the health benefits walking brings.
- ▶ **Write it down** — Using your calendar or diary may help you stay motivated.
- ▶ **With a little help** — Friends, family, partner or dog. Seek moral support. It will help you stick with it.
- ▶ **Be patient** — It won't happen overnight, but it will happen. It may take up to six weeks to feel the benefits of regular walking.



Walking offers multiple —
health benefits