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|  | Do you want to exercise more but don’t know where to start? Exercise doesn’t have to be complicated or expensive. It can be as basic as going for a walk. All you need to do is take the first step!  For a short video on this topic, click [here](https://share.vidyard.com/watch/djnPgjkREiakSKaTbZpw62) or use this link:  https://share.vidyard.com/watch/djnPgjkREiakSKaTbZpw62 |

In this document, you will find tips to help you get started and to stay motivated. You will also find a log to track your progress as you make walking part of your new healthy lifestyle.

Regular exercise is important to your well-being in many ways. It helps keep your body strong, boost your immune system, stabilize your mood and reduce your stress. It can also help you recover from an illness or an injury.

Take a moment to think about what exercise can do for you:

* What benefits do you think you can get from exercise?
* If you exercise more, how will that make you feel?
* What will you be able to do more often, longer, or do better?

## Set a goal

Most adults would benefit from about two and a half hours of brisk walking per week. Although this can be your end goal, it can take time to build up to it depending on your current physical condition, activity level and motivation.

Decide how many times a week you will go for walks, and how to fit the walks into your schedule. Then set yourself a realistic goal for the first week and increase your goals as you progress.

For example, you could start with 10-minute walks, three days a week, after lunch. After a couple of weeks, you could increase to 15-minute walks, or to 4 times a week and so on.

Once you feel comfortable walking regularly, try increasing the intensity, speed or distance of your walks.

Here are some ways you can do that:

* Measure your distance using a GPS app or device and plan to increase your distance by 10%
* Walk as fast as you can for 1 minute, then go back to your usual pace for 2
* Add stairs or hills to your route
* Replace one or two walks with sessions of cardiovascular training such as an aerobic group workout, uphill hiking, snowshoeing, swimming, jogging, etc.

## Get ready!

Here is a list items you may find useful as you start on your program:

* Comfortable running or walking shoes
* Backpack or waist bag
* Wind- and water-resistant jacket and pants
* Sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat
* Water bottle
* Walking poles
* Headlamp and reflective gear for walking in the dark

In winter, consider the following:

* Water-resistant winter running shoes or boots
* Lightweight breathable winter jacket
* Warm fleece or wool sweater
* Thermal underwear
* Ice cleats
* Warm hat, neck-warmer, mitts or gloves

## Stay motivated

Here are some tips to help you keep moving:

* Include more walking in your daily activities: add more walks in your commute, walk to the store, park farther from your destination and walk the rest of the distance
* Try walking with a friend or bring your dog with you
* Listen to music, podcasts, or audiobooks
* Join a walking club
* Subscribe to a social media group for walkers and hikers
* Explore a new trail, a new park, or a new neighborhood
* Walk inside a mall or on a treadmill, if the weather is bad
* Use a pedometer or activity bracelet to count your steps
* Celebrate your achievements!

## And…

If you feel pain or discomfort when walking or after you walk, talk to your doctor or physical therapist. They may be able to help you.

If you miss a few sessions or have to stop for a while, don’t worry, just start again at a lower pace.

***It’s your move!***

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| **Log for the week of:** |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Goal:** |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Monday** | | **Tuesday** | | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | | **Friday** | | **Saturday** | | **Sunday** | |
| **Minutes**  Spent walking or exercising |  | |  | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| **Comments**  Intensity, distance, speed, etc. |  | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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* You can print these logs and fill in paper copies, or
* Save a copy to your computer to fill in electronically. Use the Tab key to navigate from one cell to another.