

# How to Make Walking a Habit

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Studies show that **exercise** not only is good for the heart, but it also increases blood flow to the brain; reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes; improves memory; keeps bones healthy; and builds muscle strength. As we grow older, exercise helps to prevent falls and reduces the risk for dementia, particularly in men. Walking is one of the best forms of cardiovascular exercise, and it's easy and convenient, too!

## Instructions

**Difficulty:** Moderately Easy

### Things You'll Need

#### Proper Shoes for Walking

- 1 Set a regular time to walk at least 3 times each week, even if it's just around the block. Add more steps to your daily routine by taking the stairs instead of the elevator. If you ride the bus to work, get off a couple of stops earlier.
- 2 Make walking a part of something that you do already. For example, park a few blocks away from the dentist's office and walk the remaining distance. Instead of driving the kids to **school**, walk there with them. Besides doing something good for your heart, you will be a role model for healthy behavior.
- 3 Drive to a mall where you can walk indoors in extremely hot or very cold weather. As we grow older, and it becomes more difficult to walk, a mall offers a safe, comfortable place to walk.
- 4 Get to know other people. Walk with a friend or join a walking club. The company of others while you walk tends to be a great motivator.
- 5 Start out walking slowly at first. This will help to warm up your muscles and joints. After walking for about 5 minutes begin to pick up the pace. End your walk again with a slower pace.
- 6 Begin with walking just 5 – 15 minutes 3 times each week. Extend your walking time each week by just another minute or two. After you've been walking for several weeks, increase your pace.
- 7 Try walking every other day. If you don't feel too achy, walk more often. Aim to build up to walking for at least 30 minutes several days each week.