

## WALKING MORE

As little as 30 minutes of brisk walking or cycling a day is enough to improve your energy level and mood, aid with weight loss, and reduce your risk for a host of chronic afflictions and an early demise. Some easy ways you can incorporate physical activity into your daily routine:

- Try walking to nearby destinations when you are going out anyway.
- Walk or bike one daily trip for which you'd normally drive the car.
- Get a walking buddy or take a family walk after dinner.
- Walk a child to school or participate in a Walk to School Day event.
- Walk through your neighborhood and look for things you hadn't noticed before.
- Take walking meetings at work.
- Keep a daily activity log. Estimate the mileage you walked or the minutes you spent doing something active.
- Get a pedometer and consider wearing it all day long.

## Walking for Fitness

Ready to start a daily walking routine? Here are some tips for beginners:

- Start slowly. Don't test your limits right away. You should feel good at the end of your walk, not exhausted.
- Add on time slowly.
- Remember that something is always better than nothing. Even if you intended to walk 20 minutes, a 10-minute walk is still vastly better for you than doing nothing.
- Add four minutes of stretching to your daily habit to maintain your overall range of motion as well as muscle and joint health.
- If you can't take 30 minutes once a day to walk, break the time down, e.g., 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes at lunch, and 10 minutes in the evening.
- Keep it fun. Make your daily walk something you look forward to.



For additional advice on planning a walking/fitness program, check [www.walkinginfo.org/why/tips\\_walking-more.cfm](http://www.walkinginfo.org/why/tips_walking-more.cfm) for great tips from Mark Fenton, author of *The Complete Guide to Walking for Health, Weight Loss, and Fitness*.



## WALKING SAFELY

Safety is a shared responsibility for all road users, including drivers and pedestrians. The following are some tips to improve road safety for everyone.

### Safety tips for pedestrians

#### Be safe and be seen

- Stand clear of buses, hedges, parked cars or other obstacles before crossing so drivers can see you.
- Wear bright/light colored clothing and reflective materials at night.
- Cross in a well-lit area at night.

#### Be smart and alert

- Always walk on the sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.
- Don't assume vehicles will stop; make eye contact with drivers, don't just look at the vehicle. If a driver is on a cell phone, s/he may not be paying enough attention to drive safely.
- Don't rely solely on pedestrian signals; look before you cross the road.
- Be alert to engine noise or backup lights on cars when in parking lots and near on-street parking spaces.

#### Be careful at crossings

- Cross streets at marked crosswalks or intersections, if possible.
- Obey traffic signals such as WALK/DON'T WALK signs.
- Look left, right, and left again before crossing a street.
- Watch for turning vehicles; make sure the driver sees you and will stop for you.
- Look across ALL lanes you must cross and visually clear each lane before proceeding. Just because one motorist

stops, do not presume drivers in other lanes can see you and will stop for you.

- Don't wear headphones or talk on a cell phone while crossing.

### Safety tips for drivers

#### Be alert: watch for pedestrians at all times

- Scan the road and the sides of the road ahead for pedestrians.
- Before making a turn, look in all directions for pedestrians crossing.
- Never use your cell phone while driving. Hands-free devices are just as dangerous – it is talking on the phone, not holding it, that makes this a dangerous activity.
- Look carefully behind your vehicle for approaching pedestrians, especially small children, before backing up.

#### Be responsible: yield to pedestrians at crossings

- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, whether marked or unmarked.
- Yield to pedestrians when making right or left turns at intersections.
- Do not block or park in crosswalks.



#### Be patient: drive the speed limit and avoid aggressive maneuvers

- Never pass/overtake a vehicle that is stopped for pedestrians.
- Obey speed limits and come to a complete stop at STOP signs.
- Use extra caution when driving near children playing along the street or older pedestrians who may not see or hear you.
- Always be prepared to stop for pedestrians.



# Walk this Way



Adapted from [www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org), May 2009



## THE BENEFITS OF WALKING

The positive consequences of walking as a healthy mode of transportation, or as a purely recreational activity, span many aspects of our lives. They can be expressed in terms of the health of the environment as well as the health of individuals who are more physically active. A transportation system that is conducive to walking can reap many benefits in terms of reduced traffic congestion and improved quality of life. Economic rewards both to the individual and to society are also realized through reduced health care costs and reduced dependency on auto ownership. There are other economic benefits of bicycling and walking that are more difficult to measure, such as the increased economic vitality of communities that have emphasized bicycle and pedestrian mobility. Finally, walkable communities create a more equitable society that provides transportation choice for all citizens.

## Health Benefits

The health benefits of regular physical activity are far-reaching: reduced risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other chronic diseases; lower health care costs; and improved quality of life for people of all ages. Regular exercise provides the opportunity for health benefits for older adults such as a stronger heart, a more positive mental outlook and an increased chance of remaining indefinitely independent—a benefit that will become increasingly important as our population ages in the coming years.



Physical activity need not be very strenuous for an individual to reap significant health benefits. Even small increases in light to moderate activity, equivalent to walking for about 30 minutes a day, will produce measurable benefits among those who are least active.

## Health facts

- According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), more than 2,600 Americans die every day from some form of cardiovascular disease
- Regular moderate intensity exercise with a healthy diet may reduce one's risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 40 to 60 percent
- Physical activity can help prevent:
  - Heart disease
  - Obesity
  - High blood pressure
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - Osteoporosis (thinning bones)
  - Mental health problems such as depression
- Physical activity also helps you stay at a healthy weight, reduce stress, sleep better, and feel better overall.

## Transportation Benefits

Many of the trips that Americans make every day are short enough to be accomplished on foot or bicycle. Approximately 40 percent of all trips are less than two miles in length—which represents a 30-minute walk. More than a quarter are one mile or less, a walk of 15 minutes or less.



Walking and bicycling help to reduce roadway congestion. Many streets and highways carry more traffic than they were designed to handle, resulting in gridlock, wasted time and energy, pollution, and driver frustration. Walking requires significantly less space per traveler than driving. Roadway improvements to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists can also enhance safety for motorists.

## Travel facts

- One in 12 U.S. households does not own an automobile and approximately 12 percent of persons 15 or older do not drive.
- There are 96 million walking trips and nine million bike trips in the U.S. every day.
- About 40 percent of all trips are shorter than two miles—a 30-minute walk or a 10-minute bike ride.

## Environmental/Energy Benefits

Motor vehicles pollute. Besides causing the local air pollution that contributes to asthma and other medical problems, according to the EPA they are responsible for almost a third of the U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. We know that some climate disruption is inevitable, but we can still avoid the worst effects if we take action. Whenever you choose walking, biking, or transit over driving, you are choosing to be part of the solution.

## Pollution facts

- Motor vehicle emissions represent 31 percent of total carbon dioxide, 81 percent of carbon monoxide, and 49 percent of nitrogen oxides released in the U.S.
- 60 percent of the pollution created by automobile emissions happens in the first few minutes of operation, before pollution control devices can work effectively. Since "cold starts" create high levels of emissions, shorter car trips are more polluting on a per-mile basis than longer trips.
- A short, four-mile round trip by bicycle keeps about 15 pounds of pollutants out of the air we breathe.



## Economic Benefits

Walking is an affordable form of transportation. Car ownership is expensive and consumes a major portion of many Americans' income. People who walk more spend less on transportation, meaning they have more money to save or spend on other things.

## Money facts

- The cost of operating a sedan for one year is approximately \$7,834.
- Ownership of one motor vehicle accounts for more than 18 percent of a typical household's income.
- Walking is free!



## Quality of Life Benefits

Better conditions for walking have intangible benefits to the quality of life in cities and towns. In a growing number of communities, the level of walking is considered an indicator of a community's livability—a factor that has a profound impact on attracting businesses and workers as well as tourism. In cities and towns where people can regularly be seen



out walking, there is a palpable sense that these are safe and friendly places to live and visit.

The social interaction possible when the number of people walking increases is a major factor for improving quality of life. Comfortable and accessible pedestrian environments offer alternatives to personal vehicles, which limit opportunities for social contact with others. By providing appropriate pedestrian facilities and amenities, communities enable the interaction between neighbors and other citizens that



can strengthen relationships and contribute to a healthy sense of identity and place.

Finally, walking can help you save time because you are both exercising and traveling at once, often getting places faster because you don't need to look for parking, and

cheaply, because you don't have to pay for it!