



**Walk Your Way
to Wellness**

Walking...

A Step in the Right Direction

Being physically active has many benefits for people diagnosed with cancer, and walking is one of the easiest ways to add more physical activity into your life — before, during and after treatment. We've prepared this brochure to help you make walking part of your daily routine.

Potential Benefits

Walking is a low-cost activity that doesn't require any special clothes or equipment. Besides improving your quality of life, walking may:

- Boost immunity.
- Help manage emotional issues like anxiety and depression.
- Help you reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- Improve balance and coordination.
- Improve sleep.
- Improve concentration and memory.
- Increase survival after treatment.
- Increase your energy level and decrease fatigue.
- Reduce stress and lift mood.
- Strengthen bones.

Deciding how much to walk depends on your current physical activity. If you're not continually active now, take your time. Start slowly and build up as you find it easier to walk. See the **Sample Daily Walking Program** chart on page 9 as a guide.

Walking is generally a safe activity for most people. Before starting your walking program, talk with your oncology team or your personal doctor if you have any of these symptoms:

- Bone damage from hormone therapy.
- Extreme fatigue or low red blood cell count.
- Heart or breathing problems
- Radiation to groin area or lymph nodes removed from your groin area.
- Recent surgery.
- Spread of cancer to bones.
- Swelling in any part of your body.
- Weakness or unsteadiness when walking.



Stretch Before You Walk

Most experts will tell you to stretch only after you've warmed up. To warm up, walk slowly for a few minutes before picking up the pace to get the blood flowing to your major muscle groups and loosen your joints.

Stretching gently at the end of your walk is also helpful for building flexibility. Don't bounce or hold your breath when you stretch. Do each stretch slowly and move only as far as you feel comfortable.

If you think that stretching before walking may help you, ask your doctor when and how to do so safely. Show them the exercises in this brochure as examples of what you're intending to do.

Stretching Exercises



Side Reach. Reach one arm over your head and to the side. Keep your hips steady and your shoulders straight at your side. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 4 times. Change sides and repeat.



Wall Push. Lean your hands on a wall and place your feet about 3 to 4 feet away from the wall. Bend one knee and point it toward the wall. Keep your back leg straight with your foot flat and toes pointed straight ahead. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 4 times. Change leg and repeat.



Knee Pull. Lean your back against the wall. Keep your head, hips and feet in a straight line. Pull one knee toward your chest. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat four times. Change legs and repeat.



Leg Curl. Pull your right foot toward your buttocks (bottom) with your right hand. Stand straight and keep your bended knee pointing straight down. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 4 times. Change sides and repeat.



Hamstring Stretch. Stretch one leg out with your toes pointing up. Keep your other foot flat. Straighten your back, and if you feel a stretch in your back and back of your thigh, hold for 30 seconds and repeat 4 times. Change sides and repeat. If you don't feel a stretch, slowly lean forward from your hips until you do.



Make Walking a Habit

The key to building any habit is to stick with the new behavior. Some people like the peace of walking solo. If being with a friend is enjoyable for you, having a regular walking buddy may help you keep going — even on days you'd rather stay home. You can cheer each other on and serve as role models for friends, family members and others.

When you face a hurdle — such as time demands or bad weather — think of ways to beat them, perhaps do your walk inside a shopping mall. If you have a setback, start again as soon as you can. With time, walking will become part of your daily routine and may make it easier to try other types of physical activity.

How To Begin Your Walking Program

1. Make a plan

Answer these questions to help you get started:

- Where will I walk?
- How often will I walk?
- Who will walk with me?
- How far or how long will I walk?

2. Get ready

Make sure you have anything you may need.

For example:

- A hat and scarf to cover your head and ears when it's cold outside.
- A hat or visor for the sun plus sunscreen and sunglasses.
- Clothes that keep you dry and comfortable.
- Shoes with supportive insoles, thick soles and a firm heel.

3. Go

Divide your walk into three parts:

- Warm up by walking slowly.
- Increase your speed to a brisk walk. This means walking fast enough to raise your heart rate while still being able to speak and breathe easily.
- Cool down by slowing your pace.
- When walking, be sure to use proper form:
- Keep your chin up and shoulders slightly back.
- Let the heel of your foot touch the ground first and then roll your foot forward.
- Swing your arms naturally.
- Walk with your toes pointed forward.

4. Keep going

As walking becomes easier, walk faster and go farther.

- Review the daily walking chart to the right for suggestions on how to start and slowly increase your walking.
- Track your progress with a walking journal or log. Record date, time and distance. Set goals and reward yourself with a relaxing shower or 30 minutes of quiet time to yourself.
- Aim for a goal of 150 minutes each week to get and stay healthy.



**30 minutes
per day**

x



**5 days
per week**

=



**150 minutes
per week**

Walking briskly for 30 minutes per day, five days a week will help you meet this goal. But any 10-minute bout of physical activity helps.

If you can't walk for 30 minutes at a time, take three 10-minute walks instead.

One 30-minute walk = three 10-minute walks.

Sample Daily Walking Program

This sample program is only a guide. Your walking sessions may be longer or shorter based on your ability and your doctor's advice. If you're walking fewer than three times per week, give yourself more than two weeks before adding more time to your sessions. Use the **Personal Goals Chart** on page 10 to track your own progress.

Warmup (walk slowly)	Brisk Walk	Cooldown (walk slowly and stretch)	Total Session
Weeks 1–2			
5 min.	5 min.	5 min.	15 min.
Weeks 3–4			
5 min.	10 min.	5 min.	20 min.
Weeks 5–6			
5 min.	15 min.	5 min.	25 min.
Weeks 7–8			
5 min.	20 min.	5 min.	30 min.
Weeks 9–10			
5 min.	25 min.	5 min.	35 min.
Weeks 11–12			
5 min.	30 min.	5 min.	40 min.
Weeks 13–14			
5 min.	35 min.	5 min.	45 min.
Weeks 15–16			
5 min.	40 min.	5 min.	50 min.
Weeks 17–18			
5 min.	45 min.	5 min.	55 min.
Weeks 19–20			
5 min.	50 min.	5 min.	60 min.

Personal Goals Chart

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