



## Walking Health Tips

### Important Considerations when Exercising

#### Eating Right

- If you've just eaten a meal, avoid strenuous physical activity for at least 2 hours
- If you've just been vigorously active, wait about 20 minutes before eating
- If you plan to be active continuously for more than 60 minutes, you may want to take a snack along to keep up your energy level. Good choices are light foods and drinks that are high in carbohydrates such as bananas, raisins, bagels, or sport drinks

#### Shoes to Wear

- Shoes should have adequate cushioning, low heels, and be wide enough to allow for foot expansion
- Shoes should feel comfortable in the toe, arch, and heel

#### Weather Considerations

- On hot, humid days
  - Try to be physically active during the cooler and less humid parts of the day, such as early morning or early evening
  - Wear light, loose-fitting, "breathable" clothing. Never wear rubberized or plastic suits – they can cause dangerously high body temperatures
  - Drink plenty of water before, during, and after your physical activity to keep hydrated and avoid heat exhaustion and heat stroke
- On cold days
  - Wear one layer less than you'd wear if you were outside but not physically active
  - Use mittens, gloves, or cotton socks to protect your hands
  - Wear a hat, since up to 40% of your body heat is lost through your head and neck

#### Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

##### Heat Exhaustion

Dizziness  
Headache  
Nausea  
Confusion  
Body temperature below normal  
Sweating stops  
High body temperature

##### Heat Stroke (more serious)

Dizziness  
Headache  
Nausea  
Confusion  
Muscle cramps

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Should I use hand or ankle weights for even more health benefits while walking?**

- This isn't necessary or even helpful for most people
- Adding weights when you walk alters your natural body mechanics and makes you more susceptible to muscle strains, joint problems, and knee injuries
- Swing your arms naturally and walk up and down hills to help build muscle

### **When can I expect to see and feel the results?**

- Every person is different. Your progress depends on body type, level of physical activity, and how often you choose to be active
- Many people find that they have more energy and sleep better within the first several weeks

### **When I am not feeling well should I still be physically active?**

- If you feel just a little under the weather or if you're a woman experiencing menstrual cramps, then physical activity may make you feel better. Start out slowly and take it easy.
- If you have a fever or are very ill, consult your doctor and take some time off so your body can recover

### **Can you be "big and healthy"?**

- Being thin is not the same as being fit
- Some people will never be thin, but they can be healthy if they are physically active and eat a well-balanced diet