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Walking

Where can I walk?

The beauty of walking is that it can be done anywhere. Here are some suggestions:

When you travel (a great way to explore a new city)

Around your block

Your local track

Architectural walking tours

Mall walking is great for cold or rainy conditions, and it's great for social support and meeting new people. Call your local mall to find out when their walking club meets (most of the time it's before the mall opens).

Trails in your local park

Enter road races sponsored by your local running or walking club. Many running clubs sponsor walking events too, and plenty of people walk road races even when people are running. Check out your local clubs.

[American Volkssport Association](#): A network of 350 noncompetitive walking clubs that organize more than 3,000 walking events per year in all 50 states

[Rails-to-Trails](#): A nonprofit organization that converts abandoned railroad tracks into biking, hiking, and walking trails

Go hiking. It's walking in the woods! Check out the [American Hiking Society](#) for clubs in your area.

Check out local walks for causes in your area. The American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, and many others sponsor local walking events.

Walk your dog!

Pedometers

[Pedometers](#) are beeper-sized devices that measure how many steps you take. They're a great way to keep track of your walking progress!

Should I walk or run?

The benefits of running vs. walking

I'm frequently asked if walking is as good as jogging. It is for both health and fitness. Many of the studies on exercise and chronic disease prevention use walking as the measurement. The risk of injury is low for walking, most everyone can do it, it burns calories, and it makes you fit and healthy. Jogging yields the same benefits as walking, but there is more impact on your knees, hips, and other joints.

Walking for weight loss

Walking, like any other aerobic activity, burns calories and will contribute to [weight loss](#). Of course, to lose weight, you must burn more calories than you consume no matter how much you exercise, so make sure to reduce your calories if you want to lose weight, even if you're walking a lot.

Exercise is much more important for maintaining weight than it is for losing it. In fact, scientists believe it's the single best predictor of maintaining weight. Research over the past two decades clearly shows that individuals who exercise after weight loss are far more likely to maintain their weight than individuals who don't exercise.

As for walking specifically to control weight, walking is the most popular activity among participants in the National Weight Control Registry. The NWCR is a longitudinal study of more than 5,000 men and women who, in order to participate in the registry, must successfully maintain a 30-pound weight loss for a minimum of one year. The current average weight loss among the 5,000 participants is 60 pounds and the group has maintained that loss for roughly five years. It's tough to argue with success!

There you have it

It's as simple as walking out the door. And you'll be in good company. Walking is the most popular physical activity among adults in the United States. It doesn't take all that much time (you can incorporate it into your life), you've been doing it your entire life, you can do it just about anywhere, there are plenty of health and fitness benefits, and you'll feel good once you get going. What are you waiting for? Get out there and take a walk!