



# ToYourHealth

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

## Walking: A Step In The Right Direction

Have you been thinking of adding more physical activity to your life? Starting a walking program may be a great way to be more active. And walking on a regular basis may lead to many health benefits.

### THE BENEFITS OF WALKING

Walking is the most popular physical activity among adults. Taking a walk is low cost and doesn't require any special clothes or equipment.

Walking may:

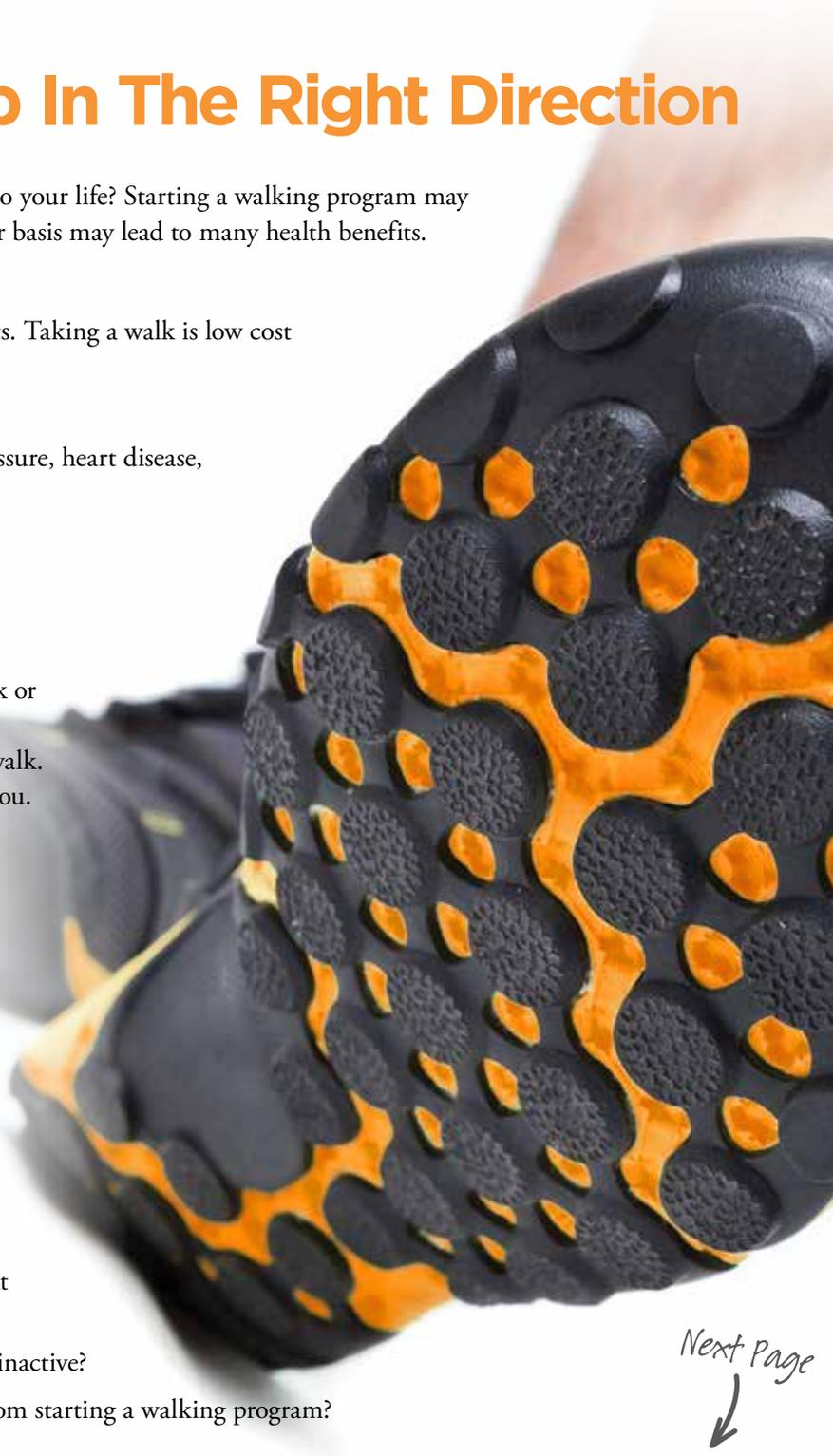
- lower your risk of health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes
- strengthen your bones and muscles
- help you burn more calories
- lift your mood

Make walking fun by going to places you enjoy, like a park or shopping center. Bring along a friend or family member to chat with, or listen to some of your favorite music as you walk. Keep the volume low so that you can hear noises around you.

### SHOULD YOU SEE A DOCTOR FIRST?

Most people do not need to see a doctor before they start a walking program. But if you answer "yes" to any of the questions below, check with your doctor first.

- Has your doctor told you that you have heart trouble, diabetes, or asthma?
- When you are physically active, do you have pains in your chest, neck, shoulder, or arm?
- Do you often feel faint or have dizzy spells?
- Do you feel very breathless after physical activity?
- Do you have bone or joint problems, like arthritis, that make it difficult for you to walk?
- Are you over 40 years old and have you recently been inactive?
- Do you have a health problem that might keep you from starting a walking program?



Next Page  
↓



# To Your Health

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

Continued from previous page

## How Do I Start?

### 1. MAKE A PLAN

The following questions may help you get started:

- Where will you walk?
- How often will you walk?
- Who will walk with you?
- How far or for how long will you walk?

### 2. GET READY

Make sure you have anything you may need:

- shoes with proper arch support, a firm heel, and thick flexible soles
- clothes that keep you dry and comfortable
- a hat or visor for the sun, sunscreen, and sunglasses
- a hat and scarf to cover your head and ears when it's cold outside

### 3. GO

Divide your walk into three parts:

1. Warm up by walking slowly.
2. 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.
3. Cool down by slowing down 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 weight forward.
- Walk with your toes pointed forward.
- Swing your arms naturally.

### 4. ADD MORE

As walking becomes easier, walk faster and go farther. Keep track of 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.

### HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO WALK?

#### 150 minutes

Amount of time adults need per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (activity that speeds up your heart rate and breathing) to stay healthy.

**30 minutes per day × 5 days per week = 150 minutes per week**

Walking briskly for 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week will help you meet this goal. But any 10-minute bout of physical activity helps.

You can also spilt it up:

**10 minutes + 10 minutes + 10 minutes = 30 minutes**

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

