

Getting Started

Here are some tips and information to help you start your personal walking program.

Make Change a Priority

- Put walking at the top of your list – remember that YOU come first!

Create an Action Plan

- Include goals, and specific actions you'll take to make it happen!
- Include rewards when you achieve specific milestones

Develop Support

- Seek family and friends who will provide support and motivation. Help them understand why this is important to you so they can do what it takes to get you walking: helping you make the time, joining you – whatever you need!
- Find people (or dogs) to walk with: family, friends, co-workers
- Find a walking group or start your own
- Seek out local resources to get you motivated, such as a walking club, parks and recreation class, trail maps
- Use your library and electronic devices to find books, websites, blogs and apps to help you

Find the Time

- Schedule it like an appointment or a meeting
- Be creative – see where you can fit it in.
- Identify three time slots where you can walk
- Keep shoes handy – car or desk drawer – so you can walk on a moment's notice.

Monitor Your Progress

- Keep track of how you are doing – compare actions to goals
- Build on success – add time, speed, distance
- Adjust as needed – revisit your schedule, walking buddy
- Celebrate milestones, but don't let setbacks derail you

Reward Yourself!

- Return to your plan and enjoy the reward you promised yourself

Keep the Long-Term Vision in Mind

- Remember the end result – better physical and mental health – and a new way of life!

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MY WALKING PLAN

State Your Purpose

Why do you want to walk? What do you hope to accomplish? What type of walking do you want to do?

Set Your Goals

Goal setting will help motivate you and keep you on track with your program. Because goals may take several steps and months to achieve, it's useful to set both short and long-term goals to provide some mileposts along the way. Use the SMART guidelines to create your goals.

SMART = Specific, Measurable, Action-Oriented, Realistic and Time-Oriented.

Short Term Goal (less than 1 month)

Goal: _____

Date: _____ Reward: _____

Medium Term Goal (1-6 months)

Goal: _____

Date: _____ Reward: _____

Long Term Goal (6-12 months)

Goal: _____

Date: _____ Reward: _____

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Identify Potential Challenges and Ways to Overcome Them

It's often helpful to anticipate a situation or challenge that prevent you from achieving your goal and determine what actions you will take to stay on track if the situation arises.

Describe a potential challenge or obstacle to achieving your goals

What specific actions will you take to overcome this challenge or obstacle?

Get Support

There are a variety of resources to help you – this can be people, community-based resources (such as walking clubs, trail maps, parks and recreation classes), or learning/motivational resources, such as books, websites or apps. List two resources that you plan to use and how you think they will help you meet your goals.

Resource# 1 _____

How will you use this resource? _____

Resource# 2 _____

How will you use this resource? _____

Track Your Progress

Monitoring your progress is an important element in maintaining and enhancing your walking program. Describe how you plan to track your progress.

Reassess Your Program and Set New Goals

Once reaching your target date and goals, it is important to reassess your program. You may ask yourself questions such as:

- Did you accomplish your goal? Why or why not?
- What was most useful in working toward your goals?
- Do you need to set new and more challenging goals?
- Do you need to alter your goals and/or program to be more realistic?

Answering these questions will help you modify your goals and/or your program and set future goals.

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