

Southport Physiotherapy Centre

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Walking for Fitness

There is no need to struggle through a gruelling work-out just to get into shape.

Walking is an ideal activity to commence a fitness program.

During a vigorous walk there is virtually no muscle system in the body that is at rest.

Walking burns calories, exercises the heart and lungs, improves circulation and can help to reduce weight.

It can also help to lower blood pressure and reduce stress.

Walking can stimulate mental and creative activity.

Indeed, it can greatly improve mental outlook, optimism and self-esteem.

No matter what age, we can participate in a walking program.

Create your own walking program

Start by walking for 1 km at a moderate comfortable pace, record the time taken.

The result is your baseline kilometre rate.

Your objective should be to increase your distance and decrease your kilometre rate.

Now calculate your lower ideal pulse rate, this is equivalent to 220 minus your age, multiplied by 0.6. $(220 - \text{age} \times 0.6)$

For example

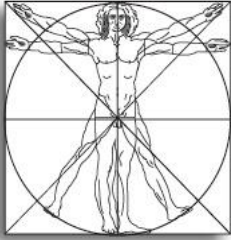
A 30-year-old would have a lower ideal pulse rate of 114 beats per minute.

This gives you an indication of an appropriate intensity at which to exercise.

To gain optimal cardiovascular fitness you should aim to exercise a minimum of 20-30 minutes at or close to your ideal pulse rate.

Try to follow this protocol at least 3 times a week.

You may progress your program by walking for longer distance, longer time or by increasing your pulse rate.



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To determine middle ideal pulse rate, calculate 220 minus your age multiplied by 0.7 (220-age x 0.7).

Initially try to maintain consistency in your walking route, you may like to measure the distance of various routes around your neighbourhood.

Walking is considered a low impact activity however there's simple ways by which you can increase the intensity of the activity.

Including some hills or stairs can quickly elevate heart rate, you may also try carrying some light weights.

However, stairs (in particular) can markedly increase the compression through your knees and care should be taken when considering this option.

Remember ultimately the walking program is designed to improve fitness and wellbeing, not to aggravate joint pain.

It is important to set short-term and long-term goals.

You may like to walk with a friend or a group of people.

This can make the walk more enjoyable and social as well as help to maintain motivation.

Always remember to keep good posture while walking, shoes are obviously important.

Walking shoes need to provide good heel stability as well as support for the arch.

They need to be flexible and lightweight and provide ample room in the toe box.

Specialist walking magazines are a good source of information on walking shoes.

Clothing should be lightweight and don't forget your hat.

Your physio can assist with advice regarding implementing a suitable walking program.

A small backpack may also be useful.

This may include some water as well as a light rain jacket if the weather turns.

A watch or heart rate monitor is useful.

You may also like to use Spotify on your phone or go old school and use an mp3 player or radio.