

How to Walking Programs to Lose Weight

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If you've never included [exercise](#) into your daily routine, this could be the time to start. Walking for as little as 20 to 30 minutes can help you manage your weight, blood pressure, avoid diseases like diabetes, high cholesterol and make you feel younger than your years. The best part of walking is that it's easy to do, doesn't require much in the way of special equipment and it's something you can do anywhere---even when you're on [vacation](#).

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Instructions

things you'll need:

- Digital watch
- Good quality walking shoes

- 1 Schedule an appointment with your physician for a complete physical examination---especially if you're over the age of 40 or have a history of heart disease in your [family](#). Make sure that she performs a resting electrocardiogram, draws blood for a lipid analysis (cholesterol) and takes a complete family health history examination. Be sure to tell her that you're about to embark on a walking program to lose weight. Based on your family history and the rest of your results, she may also want to include a treadmill test to monitor your heart's response during exercise. It will also help him calculate a more accurate exercise prescription for you based on all of your test results.
- 2 Enlist a friend, relative or neighbor to walk with you. Make a date to get together at certain times during the week to walk---and stick to it. Having a commitment to walk with a partner will help keep you both motivated and make walking more fun.
- 3 Take your resting heart rate by placing your index and middle finger across the inside of your wrist. Take your pulse for 6 seconds and multiply the results by 10. Record or make a mental note of your resting heart rate before you begin walking.
- 4 Choose a familiar path to walk, preferably one with a known distance. You can use your car to drive several routes, using its odometer. Other good choices are local parks, recreation paths or even inside a mall if it's raining or snowing. Use good quality shoes to avoid blisters and other foot problems.
- 5 Begin by walking for 10 to 15 minutes on one of your chosen paths. Using a digital watch, walk in one direction for 10 minutes, then return, for a total of 20 minutes. Immediately after you stop walking, take your pulse as you did before you began and record your pulse rate. Wait 10 minutes and take your pulse rate again. As you become fitter, your pulse rate should start decline before,

during and after exercising.

Your doctor may recommend an exercise heart rate range for maximum benefits. You can calculate your exercise heart rate range by using the following equation (for both men and women): $((220 - \text{age}) - \text{resting heart rate}) \times .70 + \text{resting heart rate (BPM)}$.

For instance, a 40 year old man with a resting heart rate of 70 beats per minute, exercising at 70 percent of his maximum heart rate would calculate his exercise heart rate as: $((220-40) - 70) \times .70 + 70 = 180-70 = 110 \times .70 = 77 + 70 = 147$ beats per minute.

6 Walk for a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes in the beginning and work your way up to longer distances. One pound of body fat has the caloric equivalent of 3,500 calories. So, to lose one pound of body fat per week, divide 3,500 calories by 7 for a total of 500 expended calories per day. Caloric expenditure depends on how much you weigh. It requires more calories to move a heavier person over one mile than a lighter person. So, in the beginning, you may need to walk for 45 minutes to expend 500 calories. However, as you become fitter and lighter, you'll need to walk further or faster to expend the same number of calories.

7 Increase either your distance or walking pace by approximately 10 percent after the first two weeks. Do not increase both at the same time. Continue to monitor your pulse rate during and after exercise. After a few weeks, you should begin to notice improvements in your pulse rate responses. If you're interested in monitoring how many calories you're burning, use the chart on the link at the bottom of this article. Heavier people tend to expend more calories per minute than lighter people.

Tips & Warnings

- Beware of good excuses for not exercising. Stick with the program.
- Don't accelerate your pace and distance too quickly.