

# INSPIRED

## To Make Healthy Choices

**Did you know that 50% of U.S. adults are living with a chronic disease, such as heart disease, cancer or diabetes?**

Staying active or increasing your activity level will assist in reducing the risks of chronic disease while also improving your health.

In order to address this dire community health issue, the **Surgeon General created a call to action to promote walking and walkable communities.** The purpose of Step It Up! is to “increase walking across the United States by calling for improved access to safe and convenient places to walk and wheelchair roll and by creating a culture that supports these activities for people of all ages and abilities.”

**Walking** makes a huge difference in your overall health by assisting in maintaining or losing weight, boosting energy levels and aiding in improvement of circulation. Studies have also found that walking:

- Prevents Type 2 Diabetes
- Strengthens your heart
- Reduces risk of certain cancers
- Slows down the rate of bone loss in your legs
- Helps alleviate symptoms of depression
- Increases quality of life
- Improves fitness and prevents physical disability in older persons
- Reduces mortality

To gain the benefits listed, it is recommended that **adults participate in moderate physical activity for 150 minutes a week.** This can be 30 minutes of walking five times a week, which you can even split up into three 10-minute walks per day. The recommendation for **children and adolescents is to be active for at least 60 minutes every day.**

Any activity is great, but walking is especially recommended because it does not require special skills, facilities or expensive equipment and is an easy physical activity to begin and maintain as part of a physically active lifestyle.

### To get the most out of your walks:

- ▶ Keep eyes focused forward
- ▶ Point your chin down and pull it in slightly
- ▶ Keep your shoulders back, down and relaxed
- ▶ Tuck your belly button gently in toward your spine to activate your abdominal muscles
- ▶ Utilize the heel-toe method, where your heel strikes the ground first, then the ball of your foot and finally your toes
- ▶ Walk with the longest stride that feels natural
- ▶ Wear comfortable shoes that support your feet

### To ensure success in reaching the daily activity goal, consider these suggestions:

- Keep walking shoes in your car and at work
- Incorporate a walk into your lunch schedule
- Ask a work colleague to join you for a walk outside or in your building
- Walk in place while on the phone
- Take walking work meetings outside
- Create opportunities to walk more by parking further away when running errands and/or shopping
- Walk during your child’s activities and practices
- Consider buying a pedometer or wearable activity monitor to track your progress and stay motivated

**Start each day by planning how you will get moving! The improvements in quality of life are undeniable when activity is part of our lives!**

For more information:  
**IMPORTANCE OF WALKING**  
[www.guideinc.org](http://www.guideinc.org)

Physical activity can reduce risk of chronic diseases and premature death.

Schedule 10-15 minute walks twice a day at work.

Find a walking “buddy” and push each other to walk regularly.

Vary your route and enjoy what’s around you.

