

Why Walking is Important for Exercise

Walking is the ideal form of exercise for those just starting out.

By

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Many aspiring runners dismiss “walk” as a four-letter word, as if it’s cheating, quitting, or not *really* exercising. But walking is actually the ideal form of exercise for most people who are starting out. It’s free, and you can do it anytime in any place; no special skill, pricey membership, or equipment (except good shoes!) is required. It is the best way to build strong bones, muscles, and tendons without getting hurt. And it’s the easiest way to develop the fitness you need to run down the road.

Here’s more on the power of walking:

It builds your foundation for running. Walking puts your legs and arms through the same general range of motion as running, but without the same impact on your bones and joints, and without the same risk of getting hurt. Plus it gives you an opportunity to explore convenient, safe, traffic-free routes, which will become super important as you get into a routine.

It keeps you healthy and injury-free. When you’re running, at some point both feet come off the ground at the same time, and when you land, the impact can be up to two to three times your body weight. But when you’re walking, one foot is on the ground at all times. That drastically reduces the impact on your bones and joints compared with running.

Form is important. Most walkers find an upright posture to be the most natural and comfortable. Take short steps to avoid overstriding, which can cause aches and pains in your legs, feet, and hips. Keep your feet low to the ground and step lightly.