



## Taking the First Step

**Many of us know we should be more active to benefit our health and well-being. This does not have to be vigorous physical activity. Just 30 minutes a day of moderate activity, such as brisk walking, is all it takes to feel the difference.**



### Why Walk?

Walking is an ideal way to start or increase physical activity because it is:

- free
- accessible
- provides an opportunity for social contact and support
- can be enjoyed safely with a low risk of injury
- can be easily incorporated into your daily life
- easier to start and sustain than other activities

### Where do I start?

Start every walk slowly, and gradually increase your pace. After about 5 minutes, start to walk a little faster so that you:

- Feel slightly warmer
- Breathe a little faster
- Feel your heart beating a little faster

Walk as if you are late for an appointment. You should be able to talk as you walk. If you can't do this then you are going too fast!

### How much, how often?

Aim to build up to 30 minutes a day of brisk walking on most days. This might sound a lot all in one go, but you can split it into smaller chunks – for example:

- Walk for 10 minutes, three times a day
- Walk for 15 minutes, twice a day

### A Walk a Day...

You can walk to relax, to socialise, to get to work or to get to the shops.

- Try to make walking part of your normal day
- Try to make it part of your life

### How Should I Feel?

Listen to your body when you walk. If you feel dizzy or develop pain or nausea, slow down or stop. If these feelings continue when you are walking at a slower pace, check with your doctor. Health professionals describe walking as the perfect activity for health. Walking is a safe activity. However, if you have any concerns about walking and your health, speak to a professional.



## Get Motivated - Stay Motivated!



Try to walk on most days of the week. You can start with a 10 minute walk and gradually increase the time you spend walking

- Walk to the local shops or post box and leave the car at home for a change
- Climb the stairs instead of taking the lift
- Use your lunch break to take a walk. Walk with a workmate and you can still catch up on all the chat
- Walk the children to school
- Walk to relax – take a stroll in the park and enjoy the green space

## You Can Take A Step Towards Better Health

Did you know that walking for just 30 minutes a day can help you to:

- Feel good (you will feel fitter, your body will be more toned, and you will feel better about yourself)
- Have more energy
- Sleep better
- Reduce stress (have you ever noticed how it's difficult to walk and worry at the same time?)
- Reduce your blood pressure

## Active people live longer and healthier lives than inactive people.

Being active:

- Reduces the risk of heart disease by half
- Reduces the risk of a number of cancers, particularly bowel and breast cancer
- Reduces the risk of type II diabetes
- Improves your mood and reduces the risk of depression
- As well as many health benefits, walking can help you feel part of your community.
- Walking can save you a bus fare, the cost of petrol for your car and will also help the environment.

## Enjoy!

Being more active will only become a habit if it's fun. The phrase "no pain, no gain" simply isn't true! If it hurts, you're hardly going to rush out and do it again!

Walk at your own pace. Start slowly and develop your walking habit. Talk while you walk and step out with a friend or join a walking group in your area.

To find a Health Walk near you go to [www.cairngormsoutdooraccess.org.uk](http://www.cairngormsoutdooraccess.org.uk)