

How to Walk Off 10 Pounds

By Margit Feury

no diet. No deprivation. No kidding! We'll show you how to amp up your activity to amble off even the most stubborn 10 pounds. Expect to lose a little more than a pound a week with our six-week walking plan. It consists of three workouts, each building on the previous one. For beginners or those who stayed sedentary over the winter, begin with Weeks 1 & 2. More experienced walkers can skip to Weeks 3 & 4. But everyone has to warm up and cool down with five minutes of strolling.

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1. Make the time

- The good news is you don't have to do all your walking in one fell swoop, says Patti Finke, a fitness coach and exercise physiologist in Portland, Oregon. "Especially when you're just starting out, throw in five minutes here and there." Walk to the farthest deli to pick up lunch, offer to deliver a memo on the fourth floor and take the stairs. Every minute of movement burns a few more calories.
- But if you really want to drop the pounds, you must pick up your pace a few times a week, as well as set aside time for at least one lengthy

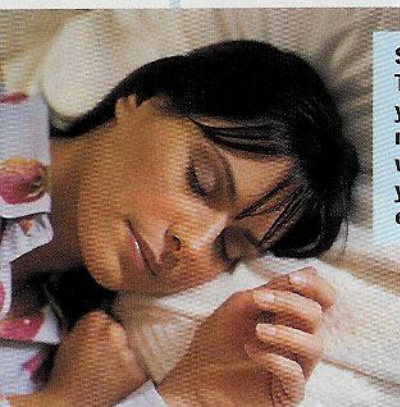
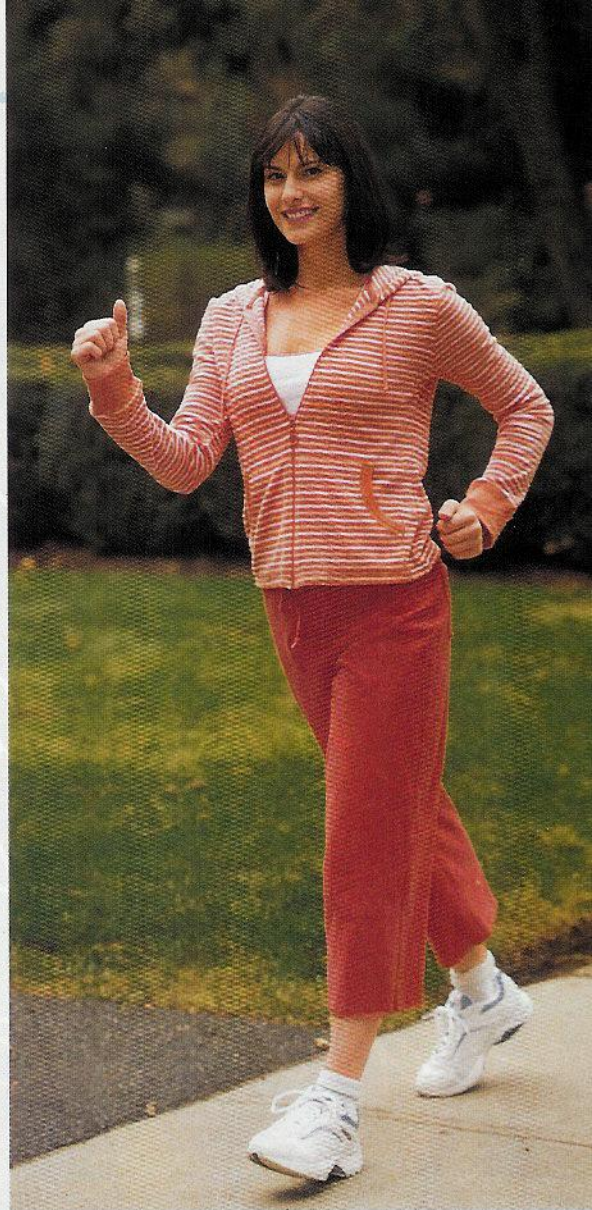
jaunt. "Long walks are key to taking off the weight," Finke explains. "It's after you hit the 30-minute mark of your walk that fat burning really kicks in."

- Never let two days pass without doing something active, even if it's only for five minutes, says Steve Wheelock, fitness guru at the Canyon Ranch in western Massachusetts. "The goal is to be a consistently active person." That's when the pounds will start to disappear.

2. Break barriers

- The key to weight loss is simple: You must burn more calories than you take in. "So along with walking, pay close attention to your diet," Wheelock advises. He suggests you think of food as fuel and consume nutritious foods such as nuts, fish, whole grains, and plenty of fruits and vegetables.

- Be wary of what you drink. "The finger is often pointed at soda, but sports drinks and even fruit juices are loaded with empty sugar calories," Finke says. So check labels before you start sipping.
- Many people stumble when their results don't meet their expectations. If the scale doesn't budge even though you're walking your socks off, remember that you're still burning fat. You're just gaining muscle that weighs more. And this "gain" will help you burn more fat in the coming weeks. Forget the scale for the first couple of weeks and gauge your progress by the way your clothes fit.
- Put in pillow time. Sleep provides



Sleep it off!
To lose weight, your body needs to be well rested so you have energy to walk.

you with the energy to get out there and walk. And if you're tired, your body hangs on to excess fat calories, storing them for energy.

● Don't let stress get the best of you. "Exercise is the best stress reliever there is," Finke says. She suggests that you get up from your desk at 55 minutes past every hour and take a five-minute walk. No time? Finke guarantees that you'll be much more productive when you return to your work.

3. Think fast

● Adding mini-bursts of speed intervals to your walks a few times a week will do wonders for your waistline. Not only will you burn more calories, you'll also increase fitness and strength, fueling your metabolism.

● Leave your hand, wrist and leg weights at home. They only slow you down, decreasing the aerobic benefits of your walk.

● An effortless way to increase your speed and calorie burn? Improve your posture. Incorporate the following four elements from Mark Fenton, author of *The Complete Guide to Walking for Health, Fitness and Weight Loss* (Lyons Press): walk with your head high and shoulders relaxed and down; take quick steps, not long strides; bend your arms and keep your elbows close to your body; roll smoothly from your heel to your toes.

4. Keep it playful

● For your weight-loss program to be a success, you need to have fun, says Finke. The last thing you want to do is get bored, so always be on the lookout for ways to revitalize your walks.

● Plan a trip to a walkable city: New York; Boston; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Portland, Oregon; Seattle; Burlington, Vermont; Boulder, Colorado. The islands of Mackinack Island, Michigan, and Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, off Cape Cod, Massachusetts, also make great sneaker-friendly vacations.

● Grab a buddy to walk with you; breathe the fresh air and catch up as you walk off the weight.

The Workout

WEEKS 1 & 2

This plan features a different walk each day. In these first two weeks the crux is consistency. So if you're a creature of habit, repeat one of the walks. And if you miss a day, don't worry, just don't let it turn into two missed workouts.

Weekly Walking Wisdom: Drinking more water—in addition to exercise—will help you lose water weight. And staying well hydrated keeps your energy level high.

M Today's Walk: Stroll for a steady 15 minutes. You should not be out of breath, but you should hear your breath, sweat a little and feel a bit flushed.

T Today's Walk: Take a watch with you. Stroll for 5 minutes, then pick up the pace for 1 minute, then slow down for 2 minutes before picking it up again. Repeat this 1-minute-fast, 2-minute-slow routine 4 to 6 times.

W Today's Walk: Before you set out, spend 5 minutes performing the two active stretches, *right*. (Plan to do these moves before every walk.) Then step out for a steady 20-minute walk.

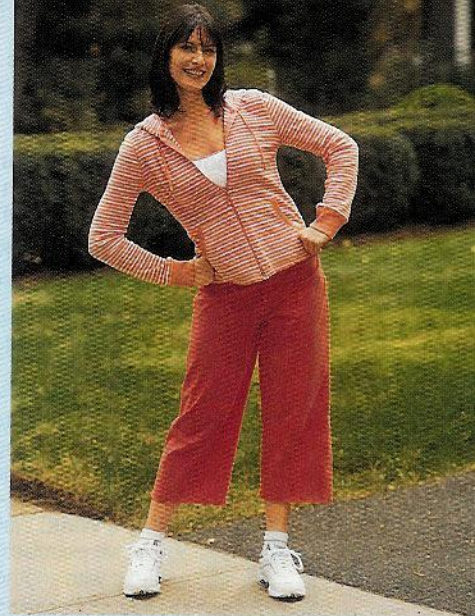
T Try Something New: Buy yourself a pair of walking, not running, shoes to wear solely (no pun intended) for your fitness workouts. Do not wear them to the grocery store or around the house. If you question whether or not you need new shoes, you *really do* need new shoes!

F Today's Walk: Try Tuesday's walk again. Instead of using a stopwatch for pace intervals, use your surroundings. Walk fast past the next five big trees or up to the stop sign at the end of the street. Give yourself time to recover, then pick up the pace again. Repeat at least 4 to 6 times.

S Today's Walk: Grab a buddy for a 30- to 45-minute walk around town. Don't forget your active stretches!

S Today's Adventure: Go somewhere new today. Visit a neighborhood park, pond or museum. Promise yourself you will walk every path in the park, all the way around the pond (twice), or up every set of stairs and down every hallway of the museum.

The Week's-End Inspiration: You are well on your way to accomplishing your goal. Chances are the pounds are already starting to disappear. Tell someone about your efforts and promise to keep her informed of your success as the weeks progress.



Active Stretches

1. Pelvic Circles ▲

Stand tall with knees slightly bent and feet shoulder-width apart. Place hands on your hips and gently push your hips forward, then swivel to the right, back, left and then forward again. Continue to circle your hips 9 more times to the right. Reverse direction for 10 pelvic circles to the left.

2. Pendulum Swings ▼

A. Stand with hands on hips, feet shoulder-width apart and gently swing right leg back, right arm forward like a pendulum. B. Keeping right hip loose, swing your leg forward and arm back in a relaxed, but controlled, motion. Do 20 times. Switch legs.



WEEKS 3 & 4

You should certainly be proud of the weight loss you have achieved so far, but much of it was probably water weight. It's time to step it up a bit, and really tackle those got-to-go pounds.

Weekly Walking Wisdom: Keep your cheekbone over your collarbone to perfect your posture, especially when heading up or down a hill.

M Today's Walk: Head out for 30 minutes today. Stay focused on your form, trying to maintain good posture and a steady brisk pace.

T Today's Walk: Strive to hit at least 4 different small hills during your walk. While walking up an incline, keep your pace steady, or for a challenge, try to increase your speed.

W Today's Walk: Walk for 15 minutes, then do the Groove While You Move exercises, *below*, to blast more calories. Finish your workout with another 15 minutes of walking.

T Try Something New: Find a friend with a gym membership, and ask to visit her facility as a guest. Or call a gym yourself and ask for a tour and instruction on using various equipment.

F Today's Walk: Strap on the stopwatch. Warm up for 5 minutes. Then alternate walking quickly for 1 minute with walking slowly for 1 minute. Keep this up for 20 minutes.

S Today's Walk: Go long and walk for a full hour. The time will fly by if you include all the techniques you've learned so far: the Groove While You Move exercises, seeking out hills and picking up the pace for 1-minute intervals.

S Today's Adventure: Ask four friends to join you on a walk to a breakfast spot 2 miles from your starting point. After warming up, play "follow the leader": Walk in a single file, with the "leader" choosing the pace for 2 to 3 minutes. Then she falls to the back of the line, giving someone else a chance to lead. Enjoy your meal!

The Week's-End Inspiration: People who exercise regularly, like you, have better control over their hunger. But when you do get hungry, reward yourself with a healthy snack, like a handful of almonds or peanut butter spread on celery sticks. The protein will give you a well-deserved energy boost.



Protein-packed peanut butter on a celery stick provides energy.



Every bit of activity will help you reach your goal. So why not make it fun?

Groove While You Move

1. Biceps Curls ▶

While walking, extend both arms straight down your sides, making loose fists. Bend your arms at the elbow, bringing the fists toward the shoulders (*pictured*), then lower. Continue to do curls for 2 minutes as you walk. Release arms and walk for 1 minute, then repeat.

2. Walking Lunges ▶

Slow down and take a wide step forward with the right foot, bending the knee over the ankle. The left leg can be slightly bent. Keep chest lifted and abs tight as you lunge (*pictured*). Push off from the left foot and take a wide step forward to lunge on opposite side. Do 5 times.

3. Arm Pumps ▶

While walking, extend arms at shoulder height. Bend right arm and bring your fist to your right shoulder (*pictured*), then extend it out as you bring the left fist in. Coordinate movement with your steps. Alternate 1 minute of arm pumps with 1 minute of normal walking. Do 3 times.



WEEKS 5 & 6

You've made it. You have reached the level where, when paired with a healthy diet, the exercise will continue to take pounds off as you challenge yourself further.

Weekly Walking Wisdom: When picking up the pace, don't try for a longer stride; instead, take quicker steps. Roll through your foot and push off with your toes. That guy you just passed should be able to see the sole of your shoe with each step.

M Today's Walk: It's time to pick up the pace for even longer periods of time. Five minutes into your walk, speed it up for 2 minutes, recover for 1 minute, and then bring it up again for 2. Repeat 5 to 6 times and then cool down with 10 minutes of recovery walking.

T Today's Walk: It's time to bring in some muscle. First, walk with purpose (like you are late for a meeting or need to make a train) for 30 minutes. Then find a bench to perform the Simple Strengtheners, *right*.

W Today's Walk: Repeat Monday's walk, adding an incline or two. Try to keep a brisk, steady pace as you hit the hills.

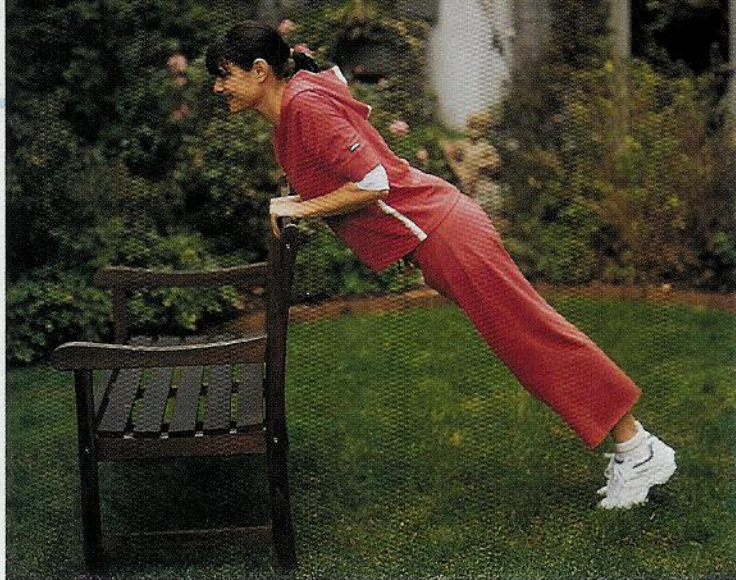
T Try Something New: With a daily dose of walking, you may be getting bored. If not, good for you! Hop on a bike, go for a swim, attend a yoga class, strap on some in-line skates or simply play with your children.

F Today's Walk: To really knock off those last few pounds, speed it up. Spot something in the distance and motor your way to it. Once you reach that spot, slow down just long enough for your breathing to return to normal. Then turn it on again. Repeat for a walking time of 45 minutes. Do the Simple Strengtheners after your walk.

S Today's Walk: Pick a place that you've always wanted to explore. Head there and walk for an hour or more.

S Today's Adventure: Take a hike. Choose an easy trail—this is about enjoying yourself and immersing yourself in the great outdoors. Since hiking often involves uneven terrain, keep the basics in mind: When walking uphill, shorten your stride, and take more steps. With each step, plant your foot flat and firmly on the ground. On the way down, take it slow. Many people make the mistake of lengthening their stride when going downhill, which can cause knee pain. Instead, lean back slightly and enjoy the view.

The Week's-End Inspiration: It takes 21 days to form a habit. And you're beyond that! Consider yourself a seasoned, committed walker. If you haven't met your goal of 10 pounds yet, success is right around the corner. Keep on trekking!



Simple Strengtheners

Triangle Push-Ups ▲

Stand about 2 to 3 feet from the back of a park bench. Lean forward, and grasp the back of the bench, fingers together, elbows angled out. Keep your body straight like a plank and your arms extended out in front of you. Slowly bend your elbows and lower your chest toward the top of the bench (*pictured*) and push back up. Work up to 15 reps.



Super Squats ◀

Step to the side of the bench and grasp the edge with one hand. Keeping your back straight and abs in, slowly bend your knees to lower your buttocks as if you were going to sit (*pictured*). Knees are over your ankles and not beyond the tips of your toes. Return to start. Do 15 to 20 squats.



Calf Raises ▶

Stand behind the bench and hold on to edge with both hands. Shift your weight to your right foot and lift the left foot up behind you. Keeping left foot lifted, come up on the ball of the right foot (*pictured*); then lower. Repeat 10 times, then switch sides.

Seated Crunch ▶

A. Sit on the bench with hands at your sides. Extend the legs with knees slightly bent and lean back.

B. Keep abs tight and lift both legs at the same time, bringing your knees toward your chest and chest toward your knees. Do 10 to 15 times.

