

WALKING TIPS TO KEEP HEALTHY

<u>TIP</u>	<u>WHY</u>	<u>HOW</u>
<u>Warm up and cool down</u>	Stretching improves circulation and decreases build-up of lactic acid – which causes muscles to ache. It also helps alleviate muscle stiffness and prevents future muscle strain, so you can walk longer and injury free.	Before and after walking allow ample time to perform a few simple stretches for the hamstrings, calves, Achilles tendons and shins (ask for our “Stretching Guidelines”)
<u>Choose proper footwear</u>	Buying shoes is the only real expense necessary for walking, so don’t cut corners on your shoe budget, treat your feet well!	If you experience swelling in your feet, try on shoes in the afternoon – when your feet are most swollen. Look for a shoe that is stable with a strong heel-counter, well cushioned, fits is comfortable when you walk.
<u>Pay attention to your feet</u>	Changes and / or pain in the feet and ankles are not normal and could indicate a serious foot or circulatory problem. Self-treatment may turn a minor problem into a major one.	Become familiar with your feet and ankles by examining them before and after walking. If you notice red spots, swelling or other abnormalities (inc. numbness, tingling or burning), call us.
<u>Walk on soft ground</u>	With age, the “fatty-pads” in your feet deteriorate, as does bone density. These factors make seniors prone to injuries & stress fractures.	If possible, walk on grass or dirt paths that are flat, even and mown (if grass). Wear cushioned footwear.
<u>Avoid walking in cold weather</u>	Cold weather causes muscles & ligaments to not move as well, limiting your ability to move freely which may increase the risk of injury.	Head to the local indoor heated pool, gym or walk at an indoor exercise facility. You can even try walking around the house.
<u>If you have Diabetes.</u>	Diabetics are more prone to infection from even minor injuries. Many people with diabetes may experience a loss of sensation in the feet, making it difficult to detect injury.	Check your feet daily for redness, blisters or injury. Numbness, tingling or wounds or should be checked immediately! Always wear socks and check shoes for any foreign objects.
<u>Smart Exercise</u>	Establishing an exercise program is very important. Knowing your limits and exercising with caution can prevent injuries as well as frustration.	Set appropriate and realistic goals. Pace yourself, choose an activity you like, and increase your program slowly. Drink lots of water on hot days and during strenuous activities.