

# Summer Walking Plan



CHERILEE GAROFANO, BA, CPT

## WALKING FOR HEALTH

Vary routine using the following guidelines:

**Heart health:** This general fitness routine involves walking 30+ minutes 3-4 days per week at a pace that allows you to talk without being out of breath. Add a cardio walk twice per week.

**Weight loss:** Walk 30-45+ minutes at a

**T**ri-athlete and marathoner Cherilee Garofano coaches *Canadian Health and Lifestyle's* Editorial Director Barbara Goodman on walking for fitness. With a new puppy, walking has become the main form of exercise for Barbara, who logs a minimum of one hour walking time throughout the day. To achieve the maximum health benefits from walking, Barbara is ready to step up her regimen.

### Walking benefits

Walking is the simplest and most natural form of exercise. While most of us are great at the window-shopping pace, increasing speed to 3mph burns up to 250 calories in 30 minutes. (Use a pedometer to determine speed.)

Almost anyone, anywhere, anytime can benefit from walking. It reduces blood pressure; helps prevent cardiovascular disease; naturally lowers cholesterol; tones muscles and strengthens bones. You can lose weight and improve your fitness level. Since it's low impact and low intensity it's great for anyone with injuries or cranky joints. Summer is the perfect time to start a walking routine to continue year-round.

### What you need

Invest in a high-quality pair of walking shoes for comfort, support and to prevent injury. Specialty stores will analyze your feet as you walk shoeless around the store, then help you choose the right fit for your foot. Wear

comfortable, constant pace 3-4 days weekly. Be sure you can talk throughout. Add a cardio walk 1-2 times weekly.

**Cardiovascular fitness:** 30+ minutes at a fast pace, ideally over slightly hilly terrain, 3-4 days per week increases both your breathing and heart rate.

PHOTOS: JOHN HALENKO; HAIR & MAKEUP: SALON DANIEL, SOHO METROPOLITAN

a light-coloured breathable hat for sun protection, and bring water to re-hydrate every 20 minutes.

### Walking for success

Be sure you know your route. Walk with a friend or dog for motivation and enjoyment. Gradually warm up muscles, lubricate joints and increase your heart rate with a slow 5 minute walk, then increase pace to your targeted walking speed. Finish with a 5 minute cool-down pace so the body can re-adjust as blood flows back to the organs and centre of the body. This alleviates an oxygen-debt from intense exercise and speeds recovery. Exercise should never be painful. If you feel any pain, see a health care specialist. Perform strength exercises immediately after your walk and before your stretches.

### What's next?

Walking is a health-protective lifestyle change that can easily become part of your daily life. To keep it exciting, vary your route, explore nature paths, and plan hiking vacations. When your health professional thinks you're ready, consider enrolling in a running program hosted by experts or try some charity walks for a good cause and to motivate you to stay the course of your new habit!

## DID YOU KNOW?

You shouldn't stretch before you exercise. Muscles are like elastic bands and stretching a cold muscle releases the elasticity, leaving you prone to injury and underperformance. Only stretch warm muscles. If you feel tightness after your warm up, stretch the specific area only.

## Walking specific strength exercises

Build endurance and strength for walking success and faster results.

### BENCH STEP-UPS

- Stand facing bench and prepare to step up on bench seat
- Step up right foot on bench. Ensure that your heel is placed firmly on seat. Step up and lift alternating knee up into the chest. Repeat 20 times per leg. Focus on smoothness and balance. Do not use arms to pull yourself up. This works balance and strengthens quadriceps, and glute muscles.



### BENCH SQUATS

- Stand with back to bench, feet hip width apart. Do a sample squat to ensure knees are far enough away from bench and that your knees do not pass your toes
- Squat onto bench seat as if you're sitting down. Pause on seat before slowly standing up. Works glutes, quadriceps and hamstring muscles
- Progress to squatting. Hover over seat (without sitting), hold for a count of 10 with your weight on your heels and slowly stand up.

# Stretches

To relieve tight muscles, prevent injury and increase muscle recovery:

Balancing yourself on the bench, hold one leg at the ankle, bend knee to kick foot back towards the glute. Make sure knees are in alignment, squeeze glutes to open the front of the hip. Hold each leg 30 seconds.



< **QUAD**

Sitting on bench cross one leg over the other, turn body towards the crossed leg. Place opposite arm on outside of knee and twist body into stretch. Hold for 30 seconds. Stretches glutes and low back.



< **SPINE**



**HAMSTRING** >

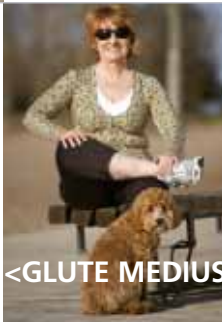
With heel of foot on bench, bend at waist with a straight back. Hold onto toe. This stretches the muscles on the back of the thigh. Think of pulling your chest down to your legs. Hold each leg for 30 seconds.



**GROIN** >

Sitting on grass, bring both feet into body by folding legs and lowering the knees to the ground. Hold onto ankles and use elbows to press knees down. Roll neck down to stretch the back. Hold for 30 seconds.

Sitting on bench, place one leg on top of opposite knee. Push knee down gently; hold each leg for 30 seconds. Stretches the glute medius.



< **GLUTE MEDIUS**

Holding onto a tree, position bottom of foot high on its arch against the tree and guide heel down to floor. Hold stretch for 15 seconds each side.



< **CALF/ANKLE**



## CALF STRETCH/ACHILLES

Holding onto the back of the bench, stretch forward, face down. Stretch legs back, press one heel down to ground to begin stretch. Toe on other foot balances as you hold the stretch for 20 seconds. Switch sides. **H&L**