

Walking

– Fitness without the stress of jogging

Effective training for every age – by Anika Hölting



I must admit that walking in this form looks a bit funny. But forget about those strange stares. There is seldom so easy a sport to do no matter what your level, and there are few that are so effective. Here are the basics you need to know as an introduction to the gentle form of walking.

What does walking do for the body?

- It is approximately 40% more effective than normal running (more burned calories)
- More fat burned through improved aerobics
- Strengthening of the back and chest muscles through upright posture
- General relaxation of the musculature, as well as reduction in back and neck pain
- Decrease in pressure on the joints and the spine compared to jogging
- Overall reduction in stress caused the body compared to jogging
- Improvement in balance, circulation and much more

Before getting started

- If possible, walk in the mornings shortly after waking up
- Stretch the body, especially the legs, torso and arms
- Warm up with a bit of walking, jumping, circling the arms as well as standing on the tips of your toes
- Drink a glass of water before you go walking
- Set yourself a goal (either amount of time or number of kilometres) before you start. This helps prevent you breaking it off early and can increase your will to succeed
- Wear professional running shoes so that your feet are well cushioned and supported. Visit a good sporting-goods store and get proper advice about which shoes are best for you
- Choose comfortable and breathable fabrics for walking
- If you have heart, spine or other joint problems be sure to ask

your doctor before starting a walking programme

The optimal pulse

The easiest and most accurate is the use of a pulse timer. It sends signals through a pulse monitor around your chest how often your heart beats per minute and is available in well-stocked sporting goods stores. Optimal fat burning depends on the pulse, which depends on age, weight and your own fitness level. It can be determined by your doctor or by your personal trainer. Pulse monitors can also be programmed for you individually.

An important rule of thumb if you don't have a monitor is that you should be able to talk without running out of breath. A further rule of thumb, like 220 minus your age, etc. are currently being debated, and measuring your own pulse by counting beats through the arteries on the wrist is very inaccurate.

The Walking Technique

- Posture: Stand with the torso stretched long by bringing the breastbone upward and forward.
- Pull your bellybutton in a little bit in order to tense up the abdominal muscles and be sure to hold this tension over the course of the entire walk
- Stretch your neck long with a light tendency to a double chin, with the shoulders relaxing downward and a bit to the back. Your eyes should be looking at a point 4 to 5 metres in front of you
- Tempo: Start with a relaxed walking pace and be sure to breathe both deeply and regularly
- Roll your feet: Toes should be

pointing forward. Start your foot's contact to the ground first with the heel. Roll the foot forward, stretch your toes out away from the ground and tense your buttocks

- Arms: The arms are bent at 90 degrees at the elbow and swing forward and back, the arms and legs swing opposite (leg back, arm forward, etc.)

- Hips: The hips should always be pointing forward and do not move to the sides at all

How often?

3-4 times per week with a minimum walking time of 30-45 minutes is a great way to get started. Your walking speed should not be more than 6.5 kilometres per hour, which is about 130 to 140 steps per minute. When looking for a place to walk, choose a soft ground over a hard-packed surface (like asphalt roads). The beach is optimal for this type of exercise. Especially beaches are less taxing on the spine and joints than those courses heading up or downhill. As an extra workout you do the last five to ten minutes of walking barefoot, which is a great workout for your feet and calf muscles.

Cool Down

End each training with a series of stretches. It is best to stretch all the muscles that were used during the exercise, including calves, the front, inside and back of the upper legs, especially the hamstrings.

I wish you a lot of fun and success with your new training!

