

THE WALKING PLAN

It's time to start on your weight-loss journey. "You don't need to use any fancy equipment or learn any complicated steps," says Leslie Sansone, group exercise leader, Walk at Home fitness trainer and designer of this year's Family Circle/AHA Start! Walking Challenge

program. "You just have to get pumped up about burning fat, toning your muscles, building bone strength, reducing stress and dramatically reducing your risk for heart disease." Following this plan will literally take you on a walk in the right direction.



Walking guru Leslie Sansone regularly takes walks with her two teenagers.

GET THE KIDS INVOLVED

If your tween or teen balks at exercising with you, think creatively. Buy your daughter three songs on iTunes and challenge her to walk a full mile in the time it takes for them to play. Some suggestions:

"Spotlight" (Jennifer Hudson)

"Don't Stop Believin'" (Glee cast)

"You Belong with Me" (Taylor Swift)

Or get the whole family out there and see who can walk a mile the fastest—the winner gets to choose a healthy option for dinner.

WEEK 1

monday	From your front door, walk for 7-8 minutes and then return home the same route—don't worry about your pace
tuesday	Walk for 10 minutes, then walk back
wednesday	Walk for a total of 15 minutes
thursday	20 minutes
friday	15 minutes

» A brisk 20-minute walk can calm you as much as if you took a mild tranquilizer. Exercise triggers the release of endorphins, brain chemicals that relieve pain and stimulate relaxation.

WEEK 2

monday	Walk 12 minutes one way, then walk back
tuesday	30 minutes
wednesday	24 minutes
thursday	30 minutes
friday	24 minutes

» When your walk surpasses the 20-minute mark, blood flow and the amount of oxygen in your blood increase.

WEEK 3

monday	30 minutes
tuesday	40 minutes
wednesday	30 minutes
thursday	40 minutes
friday	30 minutes

» Keep moving for 30 minutes or more and your body will begin releasing stored fat and start using it as energy.

WEEK 4

monday	Walk for 15 minutes total, at a quick pace. Aim for 1 mile (map your route at familycircle.com/walk2010)
tuesday	40 minutes
wednesday	30 minutes
thursday	40 minutes
friday	30 minutes

» The faster you go, the more you'll build up your heart muscle strength. The increase in blood flow will also keep arteries from hardening, which helps ward off atherosclerosis.

EVERY WEEK

saturdays/ sundays	Mix it up. Look for opportunities to walk whenever you can. Take the family for a long walk to a park. Get to a mall early and window-shop as you briskly move through the long corridors. Head to a beach or lake and walk along the shore.
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