

DO...

...go outdoors. Grass, sand, dirt, and roads are never completely level, so they work out muscles more effectively than a treadmill does, says Michele Olson, Ph.D., a professor of exercise science at Auburn University at Montgomery, in Alabama. You also burn more calories when you contend with wind, which, Olson says, "increases resistance, as if you're walking up a small hill." Research suggests that being in nature also improves mood.

...get creative indoors. Walking downhill is essential for building strength in the quadriceps and shins, says Olson. (Most people get sore after hiking on hills not because of the climb but because their muscles aren't used to the descent.) So if you must walk on a treadmill, dial up the incline. And turn around, so you're walking backward for a few minutes.



...use a pedometer. A 2007 Stanford University study reported that keeping track of your steps increases physical activity by about 27 percent, which amounts to roughly an extra mile of walking each day. Public-health and transportation consultant Mark Fenton recommends the Omron Tri-Axis pedometer (\$27, amazon.com), which tracks steps taken and time elapsed. You can also download the Moves mobile app (\$3, iTunes and Android Market), which requires almost zero setup and converts a smartphone into a pedometer.

DON'T...

...dress for a jog. Running sneakers tend to be stiff, and that can make the rolling action of walking difficult (see *The Right Way to Walk*, page 140). Instead, opt for flexible, lightweight walking sneakers that you can twist with your hands, says Michele Stanten, a certified group fitness instructor and the author of *Walk Off Weight*. The right



fit will depend on your arches and the terrain. As for clothing, bundle up in cold weather, but not too tightly, says John Castellani, Ph.D., an exercise physiologist at the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine. You should be able to move comfortably, so start with a base layer of silk or a synthetic fabric with moisture-wicking technology (like Dri-Fit), then add a fleece or wool midlayer and a moisture-proof outer layer, both of which can be easily shed. In warm weather, don thin, light-colored clothing and a hat to protect your scalp from the sun.

...carry weights. They are not helpful and may even be harmful. Two- to five-pound dumbbells "don't create enough resistance to develop meaningful changes in strength," says Olson. Yet they're heavy enough to increase the risk of shoulder injury.

...go too slow. Recent research published in the science journal *PLOS One* showed that the brisker the pace, the better. A study tracked almost 39,000 recreational walkers over 9.4 years and concluded that for every minute that participants shaved off a mile-long walk, their risk of premature death decreased by 1.8 percent.

3 Walking Workouts

Ready to take your stroll to the next level? These routines maximize the health perks of walking. All are designed for the outdoors, but the first two can also work on a treadmill.

The Heart-Health Walk

TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes

A consistent, moderate pace offers good cardiovascular benefits, but interval training (short, sharp bursts of high-intensity activity interspersed with periods of low intensity) delivers those gains sooner and in a shorter workout. This routine, designed by Leslie Sansone, the creator of the *Walk at Home* fitness DVDs, takes advantage of that science and is easily adjusted for beginners. (Just lower your speed.)

1 | Walk for five minutes at a leisurely pace (2.5 to 3 miles per hour on a treadmill).

2 | Increase your speed to a brisk pace (3 to 3.6 miles per hour on a treadmill) for five minutes. If you're walking outside, walk as if you're running late for an appointment.

3 | Walk for 30 seconds (or 40 steps) as fast as possible (at least 4.5 miles per hour on a treadmill), then walk at a brisk pace (3 to 3.6 miles per hour on a treadmill) for 2 minutes. Repeat for four cycles or 10 minutes total. (As you grow more comfortable with the workout over the following weeks, you can increase the number of cycles to challenge yourself further.)

4 | Walk at a slightly brisk pace (3 to 3.2 miles per hour) for five minutes.

5 | Cool down by walking at a leisurely pace (2.5 to 3 miles per hour) for five minutes.

The Weight-Loss Walk

TOTAL TIME: 40 to 45 minutes

Muscle burns more calories than fat, whether you're playing sports or sitting on the couch, says Wayne Westcott, Ph.D., the director of fitness research at Quincy College, in Massachusetts. So adding strength components to your walk will not only burn calories during your workout but also long after it. With that in mind, Barbara Crean, a

personal trainer at Clay Gym, in New York City, created this routine. Before you start, make sure your walk takes you to an area equipped with a bench, which you'll need in the last exercise.

1 | Warm up for two minutes, starting at a very brisk pace (at least 3.7 miles per hour on a treadmill), and gradually edge your speed up every 30 seconds. If you're on a treadmill, you should work up to at least 4.1 miles per hour. For you outdoor walkers, that's a very fast walk.

2 | Walk for 10 minutes as fast as you can without jogging. You'll burn more calories doing this than by running slowly because it requires extra work to keep your body from naturally breaking into a run.

3 | Stop walking, hit the ground, and hold a plank for one minute, making sure that your spine and buttocks form a straight line. Then do 10 push-ups. (If traditional push-ups are too difficult, lower your knees to the ground.) Follow this with 20 forward lunges on each leg. Place your weight on the front foot and lower yourself enough to create a 90-degree angle with your leg before straightening back up.

4 | Walk for another 10 minutes, again at top speed. It should be difficult, but not impossible, to have a conversation at this pace.

5 | Stop walking, get down on the ground again, and do 10 triceps push-ups (similar to regular push-ups, but with your arms placed outside your shoulders instead of under them). Next, do 40 crunches. Pull your core to your spine as you sit up.

6 | Walk for another 10 minutes at your top speed.

7 | For the last strength interval, start with dips. Sit on the edge of a bench with your hands on the edge, shoulder-width apart. Lift your rear end off the seat and walk your feet forward while keeping your buttocks as close to the edge of the bench as possible. (The farther away your feet are from the bench, the more challenging this will be.) Slowly bend your elbows to lower your body. Pause for two counts when your elbows reach 90 degrees, then straighten your arms to lift yourself back to the starting position. That's one repetition; do 10. Finish your workout with 10 lunges on each leg, followed by a one-minute plank.