

**For Your Health: *POWER*
*WALKING FOR MAXIMUM GAIN***

FOR MAXIMUM GAIN.

You don't have to walk any particular way, but there comes a point when refinements offer definite benefits. The correct posture, arm swing, and stride add up to higher-intensity exercise and lower risk of injury.

POSTURE.

Lean slightly forward—from the ankles, not the waist. Leaning from the waist will only tire your back and make breathing harder. Keep your head level and your chin up.

ARM SWING.

This makes walking a total body activity. Keep your elbows firmly bent at a 90-degree angle, and swing from the shoulder. Your hand should end its forward swing at breastbone height. On the backswing, if you're moving fast, the upper arm is almost parallel to the ground.

STRIDE.

Make your stride long and smooth. It helps to borrow some moves from competitive race walkers: Keep your supporting leg straight as your body passes over it, and let the hip rise and relax. As that leg moves to the rear, keep its foot on the ground as long as possible before pushing off.

DON'T FORGET TO STRETCH.

At whatever level you're walking, stretching is a good idea. Warm muscles respond better to stretches than cold ones, so walk for five or ten minutes until you're warm. Then stop to do at least three of the following static, no bouncing stretches five times, 20 seconds each, for each leg. Repeat at the end of the walk.

ACHILLES TENDON AND CALF.

With both hands against a wall or tree, place one foot well behind you. Keeping the rear leg straight and its heel on the ground, lean in toward the wall or tree.

QUADRICEPS.

Put the left hand on a wall or tree for balance and with the right hand reach behind your back and grasp the ankle of the right leg. Pull it up toward your buttocks until you feel tension along the front of your thigh. Repeat on the opposite side.

HAMSTRING.

Stand on one leg; prop the other leg parallel to the ground on a fence or table. Slide both hands toward the propped-up ankle as far as they'll go.

WHEN THE WEATHER IS BAD.

Move your walk indoors. Shopping malls are a popular alternative, some 2,400 malls nationwide let walkers in before shopping hours, usually between 6:30 and 10 A.M. If none is nearby, find a local health club that has an indoor track or treadmill.

RESOURCES.

Rockport Guide to Lifelong Fitness.
The Rockport Walking Institute,
220 Donald Lynch Blvd.
P.O. Box 480, Marlboro, MA 01752.