

Eight-Week Walking Program



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Talk to your doctor about how much exercise is right for you before starting any exercise program. If you have been inactive, this program can help improve your fitness. Consider investing in comfortable walking shoes to prevent injury. Walk most days of the week and over time walk longer or faster.



Source: CDC/Amanda Mills

About the program

This program starts slowly to rebuild your strength and stamina. You will walk short distances and then rest. This is called interval training. Your speed or pace when walking will slowly increase over time.

Walk at a pace that does not leave you out of breath. Only move to the next level if you feel you can. It is okay to repeat a week if the effort needed is moderately difficult for you to achieve. The goal is to increase activity safely for your body.

Week #	Walking interval	Rest interval	Repeat the intervals	Total activity time (minutes)
1	2 minutes	1 minute	5 times	10
2	4 minutes	2 minutes	4 times	16
3	5 minutes	2 minutes	4 times	20
4	7 minutes	2 minutes	3 times	21
5	5 minutes	2 minutes	5 times	25
6	10 minutes	2 minutes	3 times	30
7	15 minutes	2 minutes	2 times	30
8	20 minutes	2 minutes	2 times	40

Exercising safely

If you have chest pain, nausea or light-headedness during exercise, stop exercising and seek medical help.

Use one or more of these methods to measure how hard the exercise feels to you:

Heart Rate:

To determine your resting heart rate, take your pulse before you get out of bed in the morning:

- Find your pulse on your wrist.
- Count your pulse for 10 seconds then multiply that number by 6.
- **My resting heart rate is _____.**

During exercise:

1. Warm up for 5 minutes then check your heart rate. Exercise at 20 to 30 beats above your resting heart rate. Slow down if it is too high. **My heart rate goal for exercise is _____ to _____.**
2. End with a 5 minute cool down and then check your heart rate. Your heart rate should be within 10 beats of your resting heart rate. If it is too high, continue to cool down. **My heart rate should cool down to at least _____.**

Talk Test: Exercise at a level you can hold a conversation without breathing hard.

Borg Rating of Perceived Dyspnea*: This scale rates shortness of breath, also called dyspnea (disp-nee-uh). **If your rating is greater than 6, slow down.** If your rating is under 6, you can safely increase your speed or exercise longer.

Borg Rating of Dyspnea

0	No shortness of breath
0.5	Slight shortness of breath
1	
2	Mild shortness of breath
3	Moderate shortness of breath
4	
5	Strong or hard breathing
6	
7	Severe shortness of breath
8	
9	
10	Shortness of breath so severe you need to stop and rest

Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)*: This scale rates your effort in response to an activity. **A rating of a 3 or 4 is a safe level of exertion.** This means you are comfortably tired after an activity. If your rating is less than 3, it is safe for you to increase your speed or exercise longer. If your rating is greater than a 4, slow down.

Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion

0	No effort
0.5	Noticeable effort
1	Very light effort
2	Light effort
3	Moderate effort
4	Somewhat strong effort
5	Strong effort
6	
7	Very strong effort
8	
9	Very, very strong effort
10	Maximum effort

* Adapted from Borg G. Perceived exertion as an indicator of somatic stress. Scand J Rehabil Med. 1970;2: 92-98.