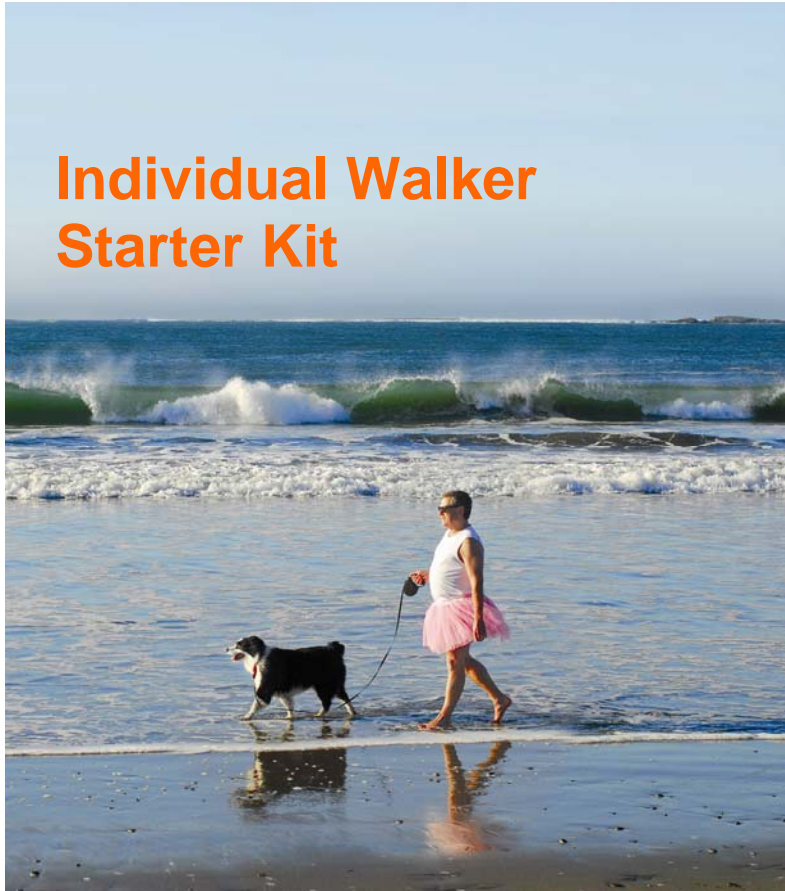


Individual Walker Starter Kit



iWALK
sonoma

A program of Health Action Sonoma County
www.iwalksonoma.org

About iWALK

iWALK is a program of Health Action, which is a partnership of community leaders and organizations committed to improving health and health care for all Sonoma County residents. We are working collaboratively to develop and implement local approaches to promote the health of our community and improve the health care delivery system.

iWALK is our first initiative. With iWALK we hope to . . .

- Inspire people all over the county to begin walking regularly to improve their health.
- Inspire people to join existing walking groups or form new ones with friends, neighbors or co-workers.
- Increase the number of walking groups in Sonoma County.
- Make Sonoma County communities more “walkable.”

For more information about Health Action see
www.sonomahealthaction.org

Acknowledgements

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WELCOME

Congratulations on choosing to be active! Walking is a great way to be active because it is free, easy, and fun.

This guide will help you get started walking all over Sonoma County. It includes tips on:

- Setting goals
- Easy ways to fit walking into your day
- Walking to lose weight
- Finding the right pair of shoes
- And sticking with it!

It is never too late to start walking. It doesn't matter how old you are or how long you've been inactive, you can start now. Walking is a great activity—it can be done almost anywhere and anytime, and it will lift your spirits. You will thank yourself for taking the time to walk just a little bit each day.

Enjoy the beautiful parks and trails, indoor walking areas, and neighborhoods right in your own community. Health Action and its partners in local cities and parks are happy to support you on your way to better health.

Note: If you currently have a health condition, ask your doctor to help you select an appropriate level of activity for your walking program.

WHY WALKING?

Walking is one activity that almost everyone can do—regardless of age or physical condition. And walking is very rewarding.

Walking...

- Is fun and easy
- Lowers your stress and boosts your energy
- Can be done just about anywhere
- Can be done alone or with friends
- Helps control weight
- Is a great way to share time with family and friends
- Gets you in touch with nature
- Strengthens your heart and bones
- Lowers your risk of heart disease, cancer, and diabetes

Thirty minutes of physical activity a day, most days a week is recommended. But don't worry if you can't walk for 30 minutes at one time. It's easy to fit walking into your busy schedule. Just walk whenever and wherever you can.

You can divide the 30 minutes into two 15-minute walks or three 10-minute walks, whatever works for you. You'll be surprised how quickly the minutes add up.

Here are some tips that will help you add up the minutes:

- Try parking in the farthest corner of the parking lot at work or the store
- Walk, instead of drive, to nearby destinations, like the store or a friend's house
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Take an after-dinner walk with your family

CREATING YOUR WALKING PLAN

Develop a walking plan and put it into action. Just follow these tips and write down your progress to stay motivated.

Set a goal that is right for you. If you aren't active now, begin by walking five to ten minutes a few days each week. Aim to be active for 30 minutes most days of the week, or 10,000 steps a day (if using a pedometer).

Find time. Make walking a priority—choose a time to walk regularly, such as in the morning after getting kids on the bus, during your lunch break or after dinner. Specify the days you will walk and mark it on your calendar.

Get support. Find friends, co-workers or family who will join you on some of your walks. People who buddy-up for physical activity are more likely to stick with it.

Gradually increase your walking. Take it easy during the first weeks. If you can't hold a conversation while you're walking, slow down. Gradually increase the amount of time you walk or the pace.

Focus on time, not distance. It is easier to mark your progress by the number of minutes you walk, rather than distance. Research shows that walking for just ten minutes, three times a day can improve your health.

Don't forget to stretch! Walk for a few minutes to warm up your muscles and then stretch. Be sure to stretch for a few minutes after walking, too.

Track your time. Keeping track is a powerful tool for making lasting changes. Use the logs in this toolkit or record your walking on your calendar.

Don't forget to reward yourself! Make it a meaningful reward, like new workout clothes or time for yourself. (Of course, skip high-calorie rewards.)

STAY MOTIVATED

It can be hard to stay motivated. Strive to make walking part of your life. Use these strategies to help you manage difficult times and make lasting changes. Even if you don't have time for a long walk, you might be able to take several shorter walks to reach to your daily goal.

Keep a journal. Record your successes for the day, how you dealt with barriers and how you feel about your progress.

Pay attention to the benefits. Are you feeling better? Do your clothes fit better? Is your blood pressure down? Are you less stressed? Do you have more energy?

Plan for barriers. We all have setbacks-- don't give up! Try not to get stuck in an "all or nothing" rut. If you miss a day, don't give up because of it, just make sure you make time to walk the next day. Plan ahead for events that might disrupt your walking routine. For example, if it's too hot or cold, walk indoors or on a treadmill.

Vary your walking routes. A change of scenery adds variety. Have an indoor walking route planned for bad weather. Keep comfortable walking shoes at work or in the car.

Partner up. Walk with a friend or family member. You can keep each other going.

Bring a four-legged friend. Don't limit yourself to humans - dogs are some of the best and most motivating partners.

Add extra steps in your day. Take the stairs, walk to your coworker instead of e-mailing, walk to the store instead of driving.

Sign-up for a community run or walk. This can keep you motivated to stay active as you prepare for the upcoming event.

Take 10. One ten-minute walking break can do a lot more to recharge you and enhance your concentration than a ten-minute coffee break.

Reclaim waiting time. Don't just sit there waiting for your kid's practice to end, or the game to start. Grab a friend and go for a walk around the park.

Include your kids. Walk them to school in the morning, you'll save gas and start the day off on a good note. After dinner, get the whole family outside for a walk around the block.

WALKING TO LOSE WEIGHT

Losing weight and keeping it off takes a commitment to changing your eating and activity habits for life. Quick, temporary fad diets can do more harm than good - and may actually make it harder for you to lose weight and keep it off in the long run. Choose a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

If you are serious about losing weight, be sure to reduce your calories AND increase your physical activity. Walking is the most popular exercise for people who have lost weight and kept it off. Most of these individuals are active at least 60 minutes each day, and have made exercise part of their daily life.

Calories and weight loss:

- A healthy rate of weight loss is one to two pounds per week. People who lose weight gradually are more likely to keep the weight off.
- To lose one pound of body fat per a week you need to get rid of 500 calories a day by eating less or exercising more.
- For example, to lose one pound per week, you can burn 250 calories per day through exercise (equal to walking briskly for an hour) AND reduce your calorie intake by 250 calories per day (equal to one 20 oz. soft drink).

Approximately how many calories can you burn by walking 30 minutes?

	Calories Burned		
	100 lb person	150lb person	200lb person
Strolling ¹	60 calories	90 calories	120 calories
Brisk ² walking	120 calories	170 calories	230 calories
Aerobic ³ walking	180 calories	270 calories	360 calories

¹ **Strolling:** Walking slowly or leisurely, just enough to stretch your legs. (2 mph)

² **Moderate/Brisk:** Your breathing and heart rate is noticeably faster but you can still carry on a conversation. (4 mph)

³ **Vigorous/Aerobic:** Your heart rate has increased a lot and you are breathing too hard and fast to hold a conversation. (5+ mph)

WALKING SHOES AND GEAR

Walking Shoes

You don't need a fancy pair of walking shoes—just put on comfortable shoes that give you good support and prevent aches and pains. If you want to purchase new shoes, here's what to look for:

- Brand name shoes can last longer and be a worthwhile investment.
- Choose a shoe that fits your foot and feels good.
- Look for firmness in the heel counter (the part that cups your heel) and good arch support. Wear the same type of socks you will be using when trying on shoes.
- Wear your shoes indoors for a few days to make sure they fit.
- Replace worn shoes. If you feel a new type of ache, then it may be time for new shoes.

Walking Clothing

Your walking clothing should be comfortable and loose fitting to allow you to move.

- In cool weather, dress in layers that can be removed and put back on as you warm up and cool down.
- Consider clothes made of high-tech fibers, such as CoolMax, if you are going to sweat. These types of clothes wick the sweat away from the body in order to prevent excessive cooling of the body.
- Wear socks that are comfortable. For long walks, consider socks made of high-tech fibers instead of cotton. They can keep your feet from blistering.
- Wear a hat to prevent sun exposure.

Things You May Want to Bring on Your Walk

- Water (if weather is warm or you plan to walk more than 30 minutes)
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Cell phone
- Pedometer or stopwatch for tracking steps or time
- Music or audio books (make sure you can hear what is going on around you)
- A friend or dog

WALKING SAFETY

- **Face the traffic.** If there isn't a sidewalk or walking path, always walk facing oncoming traffic.
- **Keep right.** If you are walking on a pedestrian path, walk on the right side so that others on bikes or rollerblades can pass on the left.
- **Carry an ID.** This is important in case of an accident or medical emergency.
- **Drink plenty of water.** Carry a water bottle with you.
- **Walk in the daytime.** If you choose to walk while it's dark use well-lighted areas.
- **Be aware of your surroundings.** If you use headphones, be sure you can hear what is going on around you.
- **Stay safe at night.** If you do walk at night, wear a reflective safety vest or reflective strips.
- **Carry a cell phone.** You may also want to have a whistle to call for help.
- **Protect yourself from the sun.** Wear a hat, sunglasses, and/or sunscreen.



SETTING GOALS

Setting goals is an important part of starting a walking habit. Make sure your goals are clear and realistic. Don't set your sights too low, but also don't set yourself up for failure. For example, if you are just starting to walk regularly, a goal of walking one hour a day, every day, will be very hard to achieve. But a goal of 10 minutes a day, 3 days a week may not be challenging enough.

Write down your goal and set a date for when you want to reach it. Track your walks. Doing so will help you see how much you've accomplished. This way you'll know when you've reached your goal.

Once you are comfortable walking for a certain amount of time a day, add more time to your goal. It may take 1 month or 4 months to get comfortable walking 30 minutes a day, most days of the week. Don't worry— you'll get there and you'll thank yourself for it!

Here are some examples of goals:

- *"I am going to walk 10-15 minutes a day, 5 days a week for 2 weeks."* (If you are using a pedometer, start with 3,000 steps a day, 5 days a week for 2 weeks.)

Once you are comfortable walking 15 minutes a day, make a new goal of 20 minutes a day. Then after a week or two, try 30 minutes a day. If you are using a pedometer, work up to 10,000 steps a day.

- *"I am going to walk 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week for 2 months."*
- *"I am going to walk with my kids to school 5 days a week."*
- *"I am going to walk at a brisk pace for 10 minutes, then vigorously for 10 minutes, and then briskly again for 10 minutes."*

Once you have reached your goal of walking 30 minutes most days of the week, try walking a little faster or for longer periods of time.

- *"I am going to walk an hour a day 5 days a week: 30 minutes before work and 30 minutes after dinner."*
- *"I am going to walk briskly for 5 minutes to warm up, then walk vigorously for 20 minutes followed by a 5 minute brisk walk to cool down."*

If you are walking to lose weight, set a goal of no more than one pound a week.

- *"I will lose 4 lbs in one month by walking 60 minutes a day, most days a week."*

If you are walking to lower your blood pressure, see your doctor if you need help setting goals or taking your blood pressure.

iWALK WALKING LOG

Month: _____

Goal: _____

Weight: _____ BMI: _____ Blood Pressure: _____

Instructions:

Write the month at the top of your log.

Next, write your goal for the month.

Under the “Mins Walked” column write the number of minutes walked each day.

Or, if you are using a pedometer, write the number of steps you took under the “Steps Walked” column.

If you want to write notes about your walk, use the “Notes” section. For example, you can write if you walked briskly or vigorously, if you walked by yourself or with a group, what trail or path you walked, or how energized you felt after!

Note: If your goal is to lose weight, or lower your body mass index (BMI) or blood pressure, measure these before you start your walking program and write them at the top of the log. Each month, on or around the same day, take these measurements again and write them in the space provided. If you do not have a scale or blood pressure monitor, have your doctor check these for you.

BMI is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both **adult** men and women. To calculate your BMI, visit:

www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi

Date	Mins Walked	Steps Walked	Notes
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