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Walking Works℠

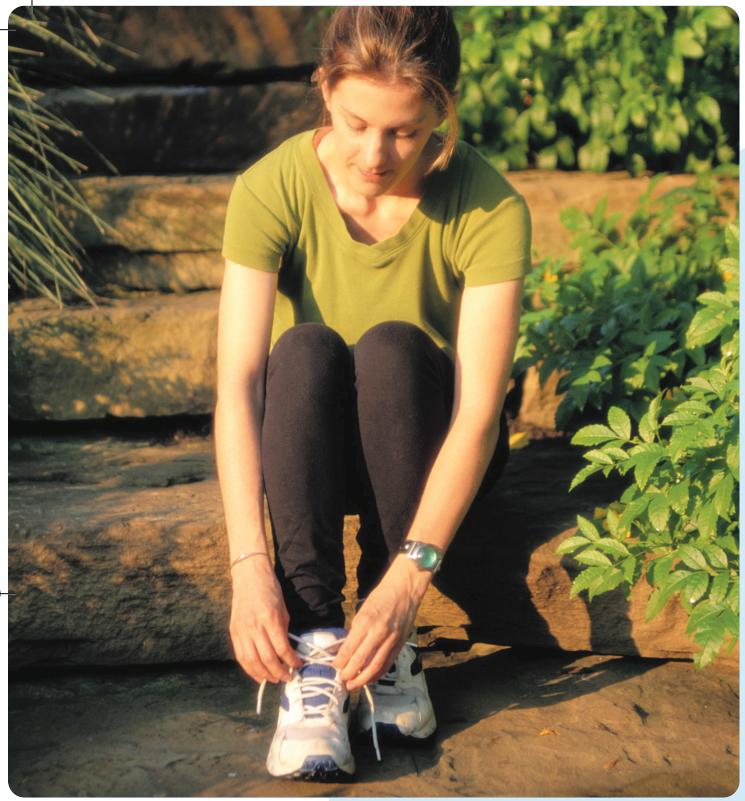
The Blue Program for a Healthier America

BlueCross BlueShield Association

An Association of Independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans

President's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports

Steps to a HealthierUS



OVERVIEW

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, in partnership with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, is sponsoring *WalkingWorks*℠, a campaign to help Americans live healthier lives by helping them set and achieve personal walking goals. It's the Blue program for a healthier America.

Walking works – in many ways. A brisk-paced walk can help you and your family look and feel better, increase energy, and pick up your spirits.

Walking can work to improve your health, too. A daily routine of 30 minutes or more of brisk walking can help you control your weight, lower cholesterol, strengthen your heart, and reduce the likelihood of serious health problems down the road. And since America is spending more than ever on preventable health problems such as obesity, heart disease and type 2 diabetes, every step you take can help build a healthier nation.

Take the ***WalkingWorks***℠ Pledge (page 10) – and treat yourself and your family to a daily routine of brisk walking. It's a healthy and simple way to feel better now and reduce the risk of developing serious health problems down the road.

The U.S. Surgeon General reports that a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, on most days of the week can produce long-term health benefits. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports recommends at least 30 minutes a day, on 5 or more days a week, or 10,000 steps daily measured by a pedometer. Not everyone can achieve 10,000 steps a day; but almost everyone can find ways to build walking into each day to accumulate at least 30 minutes of physical activity.

If you can't walk for 30 minutes at one time, take 5-, 10-, or 15-minute walks throughout the day. It all adds up to better health.

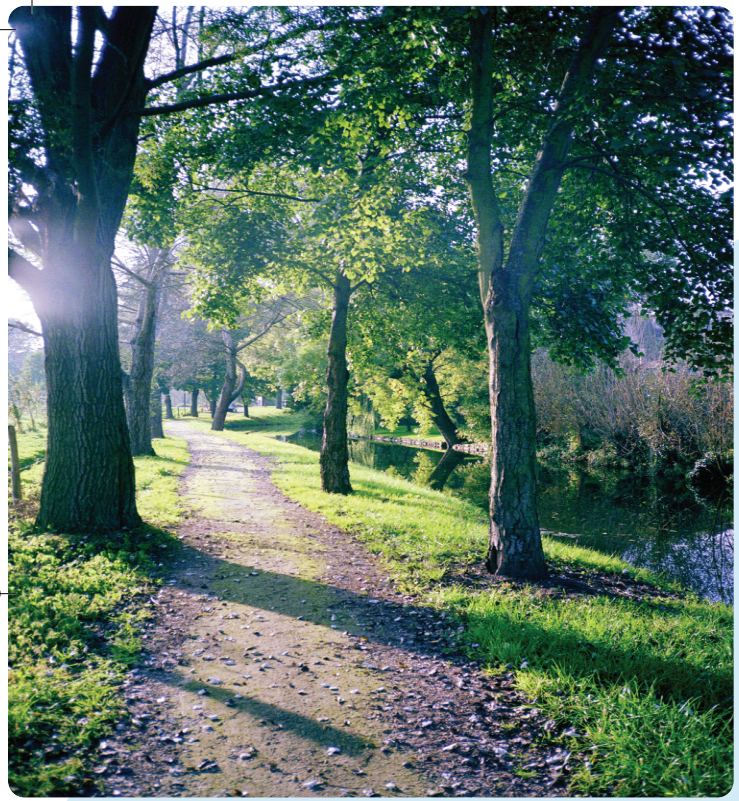
You're probably already walking more than you think. And by taking advantage of opportunities all around you to walk more every day, you'll be surprised at how quickly the steps add up! Walk up the stairs instead of riding the escalator at the mall; take an after-dinner walk with your family; choose the farthest spot in the lot at work; eat lunch outdoors instead of at your desk. By walking 30 minutes or more a day at a brisk pace, you're on your way to better health!

In the following pages, you'll find everything you need to start a regular walking routine – no matter what your fitness level. It's easy. All you need is a comfortable pair of shoes and the determination to stick to your program.

You can make walking a family activity – and reward family members who reach their daily walking goals! Walking is a great way for grandparents to spend time with grandchildren while improving their own health.

To help you stay motivated and focused on your goal, use the enclosed walking log (page 9) to help track your progress. You may want to consider using a pedometer, a small device that senses your body motion and counts your footsteps.

If you don't use a pedometer, count the number of minutes walked. Start with no less than 30 minutes a day and add more minutes as you build up endurance.



On your mark

ON YOUR MARK

Walking has gained acceptance as an excellent way to improve health and maintain a healthy weight. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports reports that walking one mile burns about 100 calories, depending on intensity, pace, and speed. According to the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, when done briskly on a regular basis, walking can:

- Decrease your risk of a heart attack
- Decrease your chance of developing type 2 diabetes
- Help control your weight
- Improve your muscle tone
- Promote your overall sense of well-being

DID YOU KNOW...

Regular physical activity helps prevent many chronic diseases and conditions, such as heart disease, colon cancer, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and conditions associated with obesity, such as stroke and arthritis. If most Americans adopted a daily routine of brisk walking, the result would be a savings of billions of dollars in healthcare costs related to these conditions (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Get set

GET SET

First Steps. Walking is a simple and flexible way to improve your health, and it's free. You can walk alone or with friends, indoors or outdoors, on a city sidewalk or a country trail, any time of the year. But before you start your walking program, be sure to follow a few basic principles to keep you safe and comfortable (for more tips, please visit **www.fitness.gov**):

- If you have a health condition or have not done any regular physical activity for a long time (men over 40, women over 50), talk with your doctor before starting any new exercise program.
- Choose comfortable, supportive shoes, such as running, walking, or cross training shoes, or light hiking boots.
- If you are going to do stretching exercises, be sure your muscles are warmed up first. Walk briskly for 10 minutes before stretching.
- Maintain a brisk pace. You should work hard to keep up your pace but still be able to talk while walking.
- Practice correct posture – head upright, arms bent at the elbow and swinging as you stride.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after walking to cool working muscles and keep your body hydrated.
- If you're going for a long walk, include a cool–down period to reduce stress on your heart and muscles.

Go!

GO!

It's important to know your own starting point before you set your personal walking goals. This knowledge will help you create a personalized walking program that is right for you.

1. BASELINE

If you are using a pedometer, count your steps for seven days; if you don't have a pedometer, follow the recommendations of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports – begin with 30 minutes of brisk walking at least 5 days each week. Keep a log (page 9) to track the amount of daily walking activity you are currently doing. This will establish your baseline. Include all of your normal walking activities, such as walking up the stairs at home, walking to work, etc. At the end of each day, write down your total number of steps in the walking log on page 9. If you are not using a pedometer, keep track of the minutes you spend walking.

2. BENCHMARK

Your benchmark is the highest number of steps you walked on any given day while establishing your baseline the first week. Use that number as your daily goal for the second and third weeks. Log your daily walks, and at the end of the third week, review your log. If you averaged your goal, add another 500 steps or several more minutes to your daily goal for the fourth and fifth weeks.

3. BUILD

At the end of each 2-week period, try to add 500 steps or several more minutes to your walking goal. If you had difficulty reaching your goal, walk at the same level until you build enough endurance to increase your target. Continue to log your activity to prevent slipping back or dropping out. If you find yourself falling behind your average daily goal, try not to become discouraged. To maintain your motivation, keep logging your progress and stay with the same number of steps or minutes instead of increasing your target.

Keep in mind that 10,000 steps per day may not be a realistic goal for everyone. That's why we're offering a flexible program to help you set your own personal goals. If you are very overweight or have other health problems, ask your doctor to help you determine a walking goal appropriate for you.

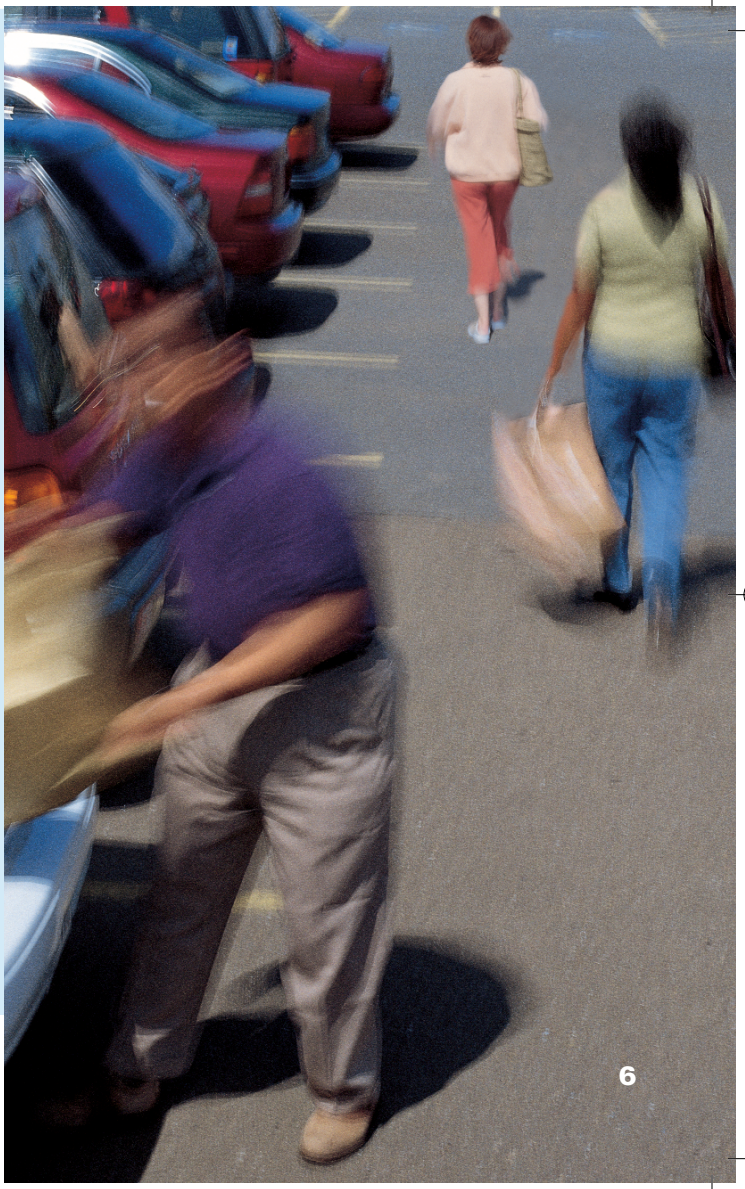
MAKE DAILY WALKING A HABIT

There are ways you can increase your physical activity to maintain a basic level of fitness – without setting aside a big part of your busy day. That's the value of the ***WalkingWorks***℠ approach – finding everyday opportunities to walk more to meet your goal.

The challenge is to think creatively about ways you might add steps to your day, and make walking a habit.

- Take stairs instead of elevators or get off below your destination and walk up a few stairs
- Park a few blocks from your destination or at the far end of the parking lot
- Walk the last few blocks instead of riding the bus all the way to work
- Park at the opposite end of the mall from where you need to shop
- Walk around the field at your children's ball games
- Consider adding other routine walking to your day by organizing a lunchtime walking group at work, or a before- or after-work group with friends or neighbors
- Make family time active time. After dinner, get the whole family outside for a game of tag and a walk around the block.

Try not to get stuck in the "all or nothing" rut. Even if you don't have time for a long walk, you might be able to take several brisk walks to add up to your daily goal.



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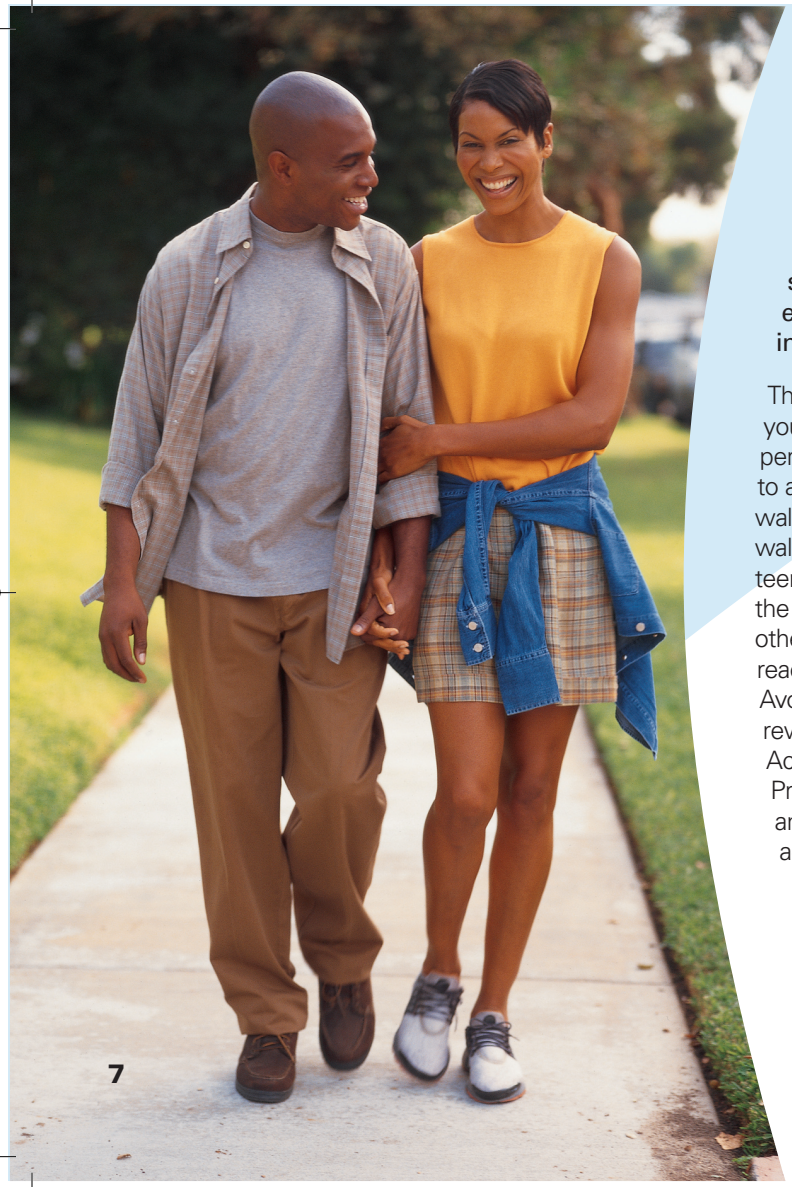

KEEP GOING

A key part of your ***WalkingWorks***℠ program is to log your progress every day. Reward yourself as you make progress toward your goals. As you record your steps, take a few minutes to sit down and relax. Think about the good feelings exercise gives you, and reflect on what you've accomplished. This type of internal reward can help you make a long-term commitment to regular walking.

There are other ways to help keep you motivated. When you reach your personal goal, consider treating yourself to a new pair of walking shoes or a new walking outfit or t-shirt. If you are walking as a family, treat children and teens to a special activity excursion – to the park, the beach, the skating rink, or other outdoor fun – as a reward for reaching their daily goals for the week. Avoid using food, snacks or candy as a reward. Children can earn a Presidential Active Lifestyle Award from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports for any kind of physical activity done for 60 minutes a day, five days a week, for six weeks.

Your commitment to a "healthier you" can also mean a healthier America. That's why, as a ***WalkingWorks***℠ participant, you and your family are eligible to take the President's Challenge and receive a Presidential Active Lifestyle Award. This award is sponsored by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports to recognize Americans of all ages for committing to a program of regular physical activity, like ***WalkingWorks***℠. Adults and children can achieve the award together – it's a great way for families to work together – everyone benefits!

TAKE THE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE

Log on to **www.presidentschallenge.org** to find out more about America's way to recognize your commitment and achievement of a healthy, active lifestyle.

YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY

Congratulations for choosing to walk! A few weeks after you start the program, you will feel better than when you began. And by committing yourself and your family to a daily walking program, you will be steps closer to improving your health.

By walking, you are contributing to the nation's health. With each step you take, you are lowering your risk of developing serious health conditions, such as heart disease, colon cancer, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and conditions related to obesity, such as arthritis. And that's important to the nation's health, because America is spending hundreds of billions of dollars on preventable health conditions such as type 2 diabetes and overweight/obesity.

Walking also helps you maintain a positive mental outlook to avoid depression and anxiety.

Every day each of us has opportunities to choose a healthy lifestyle. The choices we each make can change our lives.

For information and resources to help become physically active and fit for life, visit the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Web site, **www.fitness.gov**.

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

WALKING LOG Use this log to record the number of steps you take and time spent walking over the next six weeks. Track your progress over time and apply for the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (www.presidentschallenge.org).

	Date	Performance Entry (Time, Distance, Etc.)		Date	Performance Entry (Time, Distance, Etc.)
WEEK 1			WEEK 2		
Signature			Signature		
WEEK 3			WEEK 4		
Signature			Signature		

	Date	Performance Entry (Time, Distance, Etc.)		Date	Performance Entry (Time, Distance, Etc.)
WEEK 5			WEEK 6		
Signature			Signature		

WalkingWorks℠ Pledge

I pledge to take steps towards a healthier me, and a healthier America.
I will make choices that include walking as an easy part of my daily routine.
With the help of this program, I will set and meet personalized goals and record my progress.
In doing so, I can decrease my risk for health problems down the road and do my part to keep healthcare affordable for everyone.

Signature _____

MAKE EVERY STEP COUNT

Keeping track of how much you walk every day is important to help you succeed. Counting your steps is easy with a pedometer, which senses your body motion and counts your footsteps. This count is converted into distance by calculating the length of your usual stride.

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