

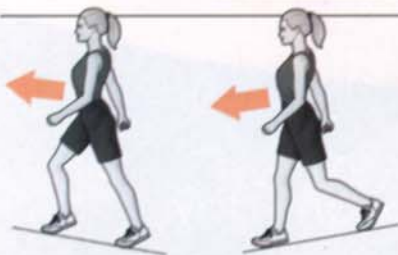
Customize Your Walking Workout

Walking may be a simple activity, but it can take on many shapes and forms—and lead to a variety of outcomes. “Whether you want to lose weight, build muscle or tame stress, adjusting the way you walk will get you results,” says Mark Fenton, author of *The Complete Guide to Walking, New and Revised: For Health, Weight Loss, and Fitness* (The Lyons Press). Find the customized routine below that meets your needs, and begin walking that way. If you want it all—a slimmer waist, a toned backside and a more relaxed attitude—then alternate between the plans below. There’s no easier way to look great and feel fabulous.



Before starting a new exercise routine, stop and consider what you want to get out of it. Then act.

YOUR GOAL	THE PLAN	WHY IT WORKS
Drop a Dress Size	Walk for 60 minutes, three times a week. Plus, head out for 90 minutes at least once a week. Low on time one day? Break up your hour-long jaunt by walking twice for 15 minutes and once for 30.	Long moderate walks burn more calories than short fast walks. In fact, walk for one hour, three days a week, and you’ll lose an average of 15 pounds in a year—without changing your diet.
Firm Up	After a five-minute warm-up, take a route that has small inclines as well as steep climbs. Spend 20 to 30 minutes heading upward at least three times a week. Stairs also count.	Varied terrain boosts strength and builds muscle. An uphill climb challenges your quadriceps and your glutes to work harder. Going downhill tones the calves and the back of your thighs.
Zap Stress	Feeling frazzled? Take a brisk walk to unwind. Aim for a pace of about 50 steps in 20 seconds (which is equivalent to approximately 4 miles per hour), and keep moving for 15 to 20 minutes.	A brisk walk has the same effects as a mild antidepressant. Why? Walking quickly produces endorphins, the same feel-good hormones associated with a runner’s high.



Tackle Hills with the Proper Form

Instead of attempting to barrel up an incline as fast as possible, shorten your stride and focus on maintaining an easy and constant pace. On the way down, elongate your stride while keeping core and leg muscles engaged, so you will gain energy that will propel you forward.

Share Your Stories

Do you walk regularly? With a friend? A group? Or solo? We want to hear how you weave a walking workout into your busy day. Write to us at WalkWithFC@familycircle.com, and your story may be featured in an upcoming issue.