



Walking - Just what the doctor ordered!

How walking can improve your diabetes care, and more.

By Dr. Thomas Hastings, Internal Medicine, Esse Health

January 2010

“Walking is man’s best medicine.”

Hippocrates

Greek physician (460 BC - 377 BC)

“Walking is the best possible exercise.”

Thomas Jefferson

3rd president of the U.S. (1743 - 1826)

What these famous men said many years ago, is truer today than it has ever been. Medical research has shown that individuals with diabetes who walk a half-hour daily (or 3-4 hours a week) can reduce their chance of heart attack, stroke and death by 50 percent. That is more than all the medical interventions to treat diabetes combined! And there are plenty of other clinically proven benefits: decreases depression and anxiety; decreases chance of falling and fracture; increases bone density; improves arthritic symptoms; helps achieve and maintain ideal body weight and cholesterol; and lowers blood pressure. In spite of all of these benefits, why don’t we walk 30 minutes a day?

Finding the time, motivation, energy, discipline and routine is easier than you might think. Simply walk on a treadmill in front of the TV or visit with family or a neighbor as you walk a few blocks in the early morning or evening. Varying routine by scheduling someplace interesting to walk, such as the park, zoo, hiking trail or museum, helps make exercise interesting. Listening to books on tape, podcasts, radio or music can also be a great way to keep entertained while staying on pace. Setting reasonable goals with associated rewards is a nice way to motivate and incentivize yourself.

“Everywhere is walking distance if you have the time.”

Steven Wright

U.S. comedian and actor (1955 -)

Walking the short trip, rather than driving, is another way to be “green” and healthy at the same time. Since we are always looking for ways to multi

task, consider this method. You can listen to your favorite music, get great exercise, conserve energy and preserve the environment all while walking to run short errands. So, put on your favorite comfortable shoes and clothes, and GO...

Resources

WikiHow: “How to Start Walking for Exercise”

<http://www.wikihow.com/Start-Walking-for-Exercise>

About.com: “How to Start Walking for Absolute Beginners”

<http://walking.about.com/cs/beginners/a/blhowprepare.htm>

Trails.com: “St. Louis Area Walking”

<http://www.trails.com/activity.aspx?area=14019>

About.com: “Top Walks: Missouri Botanical Garden”

<http://walking.about.com/od/trailusaeast/p/ucstlouis.htm>

Amazon.com: “Walking St. Louis” by Judith Galas
“If you’re visiting St. Louis, you’ll be sure you’re on the right track with “Walking St. Louis” to guide you. This compact guidebook will walk you through the best St. Louis has to offer, from the original town site at Laclede’s Landing to the historical Gateway Arch, from the jazz and blues of Soulard to the funky shops of University City, from the stately homes of the Central West End to the vibrant flora of the Missouri Botanical Garden. Inside are step-by-step directions and detailed maps of 20 excursions, as well as firsthand descriptions of points of interest along the way. The length and difficulty of the walks vary, but most will take no more than an hour or two.”

<http://www.amazon.com/Walking-St-Louis-Judith-Galas/dp/1560446005>

For more information on how to effectively manage your diabetes care, please contact your health care provider.

www.essehealth.com