

Walking in Manchester

Information about walking

Here we have provided plenty of information about walking. Whether you're planning on walking for health reasons, for fun or just to get somewhere there is plenty of information to start you off on the right foot.

Benefits of walking more

Walking is **free** and it can be great **FUN**. It is a safe and sociable activity that can help improve your social life and help you meet new friends. It can help boost your confidence and make you feel more relaxed and give you more energy.

Regular walking can also improve your physical health by helping reduce your risk of developing:

- Coronary Heart Disease
- Bowel Cancer
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- High Blood Pressure
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Osteoporosis
- Arthritis
- Stress / Anxiety

Brisk Walking is best: Remember any walking is better than none – but brisk walking is best. However, if you have done none or very little activity recently look at 'How to build walking into your life. Brisk walking is the most ideal form of walking because it makes your **heart beat slightly faster** and makes you **breathe slightly harder**. You may also feel **slightly warm and sweaty**. When walking briskly it is important that you should always be able to talk, hum or whistle.

How to build walking into your life

To make walking a part of your daily routine it is important to start gradually and build up slowly.

Before you start:

Begin first by thinking about how much walking you already do. Spend the first week keeping a record of how often you walk and for how long. If you have a step-o-meter use it for a week just to find out how many steps you do in an average day.

STEP 1:

Try to introduce one or two 10 minute walk on three days of the week. These could include walking to the shops, taking the children to school or just walking round the block where you live.

STEP 2:

When you feel comfortable with two ten minute walks on three days, then try increasing your walking to two walks of 15 minutes each on four days of the week .

STEP 3:

When you feel ready to increase your activity try building up to one walk of 30 minutes or two walks of 15 minutes on five days each week. You should try to gradually increase the speed that you walk at – trying always to include a section of “**brisk walking**” or you could try and include some inclines or slight hills.

Keeping it going: Try to keep up with your 30 minute walks on five days each week try and include some uphill sections gradually increasing the steepness of the slope.

Finally: If you find you miss a week or two because you are ill or for any other reason – just begin again at the point where you feel comfortable and then gradually increase it working through the process as described above.

Keeping safe whilst walking

Traffic is increasing all the time and so when walking you need to be alert to your own safety. If you are walking alone, or with others, then it is important to remember a few golden rules:

- When walking on the pavement – walk away from the edge of the road
- Stick to areas that you know and feel safe in
- Choose busy areas where there are more people around
- In very cold, wet or icy weather you might want find a safe indoor area for walking in, like a shopping centre

These are just some of the things you need to think about when out walking that will help keep you safe and help ensure you enjoy your walking. If you suffer from heart problems, asthma or angina please ask for a copy of “Walking in Winter” information sheet.

You can get a copy of this from the PACE Team.

Winter Walking

During winter it is easy to be tempted to stay indoors and to sit in the warmth. However, for most people, although keeping warm is important, the body has its own 'central heating system' which needs to be stimulated and enhanced by taking part in regular physical activity.

When the weather is very cold it is important to warm up slowly indoors before going outside to walk briskly. Start off by moving the extremities first for example try toe tapping and gentle clapping and then gradually start moving the legs and arms, increasing the pace slowly until you are walking or marching. Remember the leg muscles, particularly the thighs, stimulate the heart to produce the best circulation and keep you warm for longer.

After a good warm up indoors, it is time to go out for a good brisk walk. Try to make sure that you walk at a brisk pace - that is a pace that keeps you warm and just slightly out of breath. However, it is important that you do not become too breathless or feel that your breathing is becoming laboured as this means that oxygen cannot get to the lungs and those working muscles (including the heart). This is not good for anyone especially those people with heart or lung problems and so walking at this pace should be avoided.

Special note for those with heart or lung problems: It is important on very cold and/or windy days for those with heart or lung problems to wear a scarf that can be used to cover the nose and mouth to help prevent the very cold air from triggering either angina attacks or asthma attacks. If you are in any doubt about whether you should be walking contact your G.P. for further advice.

Clothing and Footwear: It is a good idea to try and dress using several layers of thin clothing rather than just wearing one big coat. The layers trap air in between them and so help to insulate against the cold outside. If you can afford it consider buying outer clothing that is windproof, waterproof and breathable. These help to maintain warmth and comfort without trapping sweat on the inside of the garment. Try buying your clothing over a period of time (check out the sales for last seasons' styles and colours!)

Don't forget your HAT and GLOVES when walking during winter! Gloves keep your hands warm and dry. Try to get thermal gloves that help prevent heat loss. Hats are important on cold and windy days as they help prevent heat loss through the top of the head during cold weather and help you stay feeling warm and comfortable.

Footwear is always an important part of your walking gear. It is especially important during the winter months when it gets icy, slippery and/or wet under foot. A pair of stout walking shoes or boots with a rubber sole and a good deep tread are important to keep you upright! It isn't necessary to buy the most expensive pair - what is important that they are a good fit and are comfortable to walk in – so shop around. When buying new boots/shoes it is important to wear them around the house to make sure they fit properly and don't cause blisters or rub anywhere BEFORE going walking in them. It is also a good idea to waterproof boots or shoes to help keep your feet warm and dry. Ask at the shop which product is best for your particular boots.

Some people also find walking poles give extra stability and they certainly help protect the knees and hips on any walks involving hills!

Warming Down: After you have completed your walk it is important to warm down slowly. These activities can be similar to those of the warm up but should gradually decrease in speed as this enables the heart rate to slow gradually until it returns to normal.

You can then relax and enjoy a well earned cup of tea.

Tips for using a Stepometer

Many people now have Step-O-Meters and these are a great way to check just how active you are. If you have a Step-O-Meter, your target should be to do 10,000 steps every day. Use the guide below to see where you are on the scale.

Number of steps per day	Target
1,000 - 3,000	Could do better - Any activity is good for you so try sitting less and walking for about 10 minutes a couple of times each day. Try to do a least one short walk each day.
3,000 - 5,000	Average - Try to use the car less. Try to walk all journeys less than a mile. Try to include at least one short or medium walk each day.
5,000 - 7,000	Getting better - Can you increase the distance you walk each day by taking a longer route? Try to include at least one medium walk each day.
7,000 - 9,000	Nearly there - Try adding a little more distance or a little more time to what you are already doing.
10,000 or more!	FANTASTIC! KEEP IT UP - try to challenge yourself a little more by walking some longer walks or by including steeper inclines or hills. You'll soon feel on top of the world!

How many steps in a mile? Many people ask how many steps are there in a mile? The answer is that there isn't an exact number; the number of steps you take in a mile will depend on many things like: the length of your step, whether you are walking up hill or on the flat. The average number of steps per mile will be somewhere between 2,000 and 2,500. You can use this figure as a guide. Get the most out of your step-o-meter - download and print off our Step-O-Meter record sheet and keep a track of your progress & Latin Specialists