

Healthy Lifestyles Health Hub

MARCH INTO HEALTH

Could achieving your fitness goals really be as simple as walking?

The answer is yes! Research has shown that a brisk 30 minute walk can both improve your physical wellness *and* positively impact your mental and emotional wellness.

What is a brisk walk?

Intermountain Healthcare has defined a brisk walk as a pace of at least 3.5 mph. This means you should be moving quickly but still be able to hold a conversation. However, this is not a leisurely walk around the neighborhood. Arms should be kept at a 90 degree angle. And if you want a more intense walking routine, try interval training, where you alternate between rapid and slow paces.

To get the health benefits of walking, you must walk briskly 30 minutes a day. But this does not need to be done all at once. You can take a 10 minute walk to your friend's home and then walk back an hour later. You can enjoy a quick walk around the store before grocery shopping in the morning, then walk to the park in the evening. As long you reach a total of 30 minutes at the end of the day, health benefits are being achieved.



"All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking."

~Friedrich Nietzsche



Are there any benefits to brisk walking?

Harvard research has shown that not only can brisk walking help you achieve your fitness goals, but it also has a variety of extra benefits. Some of these surprising benefits include cutting the effects of obesity-promoting genes in half, curbing a sweet tooth, reducing the risk for breast cancer, preventing arthritis, and reducing sick days by 43%. But the truth is, even knowing all of these benefits, we may still struggle to achieve our goals for being more physically active. So here are some tips to help you get your body moving and your feet marching.

Set an attainable goal

All good things come with time. If fitness is new to you, start with a small goal and progress to a bigger one. Make an attainable goal of walking 10 minutes a day during your lunch hour. Once that becomes a habit, increase that time to 20 minutes, and then to 30. And if you need help starting a safe walking routine, consider joining Living Well's [**Walk with Ease**](#) program.

Make it fun

Everyone loves to have a good time, so find a way to make walking fun for you. Start a walking group in your neighborhood. Join our [**March into May**](#) program and form a group to compete against other coworkers for the most steps by May. Or listen to our wellness podcast and get some much needed *you* time. No matter what you choose, choose to find a way to enjoy walking.

Get a change of scenery

Don't walk the same route every day. Switch up your routine. Utah has so many places for you to [**explore**](#). Find a park near your home to walk around. Take a short hike in the mountains if the weather permits. Walk your local mall or department store. Or simply enjoy a new path in your neighborhood. Change will keep things interesting and help you stay motivated to keep walking.

Don't give up

Habits take time to form. If you are new to this form of physical activity, it is going to take time and may include a few missed days as you start your new routine. But one or two missed days is not the end. Recommit and start again. Don't let one bad day keep you from progressing. Every day is a new opportunity to reach your goal.