# DON'T GO OVERBOARD – STAY AFLOAT WITH PORTION CONTROL

Studies show that when people are offered larger servings; they tend to eat more calories.

It is hard to stop eating when there is more food on your plate! The simple answer might be: "Well, then, don't eat the whole serving, and you won't get too many calories!" It's not quite that simple.

First of all, studies show that when people are offered larger portions of food, they tend to eat more calories. In one study, participants ate 30% more calories when offered the largest portion of an entrée, compared to when they were offered the smallest portion (*Am J Clin Nutr 2002;76(6):1207-1213*). It's hard to stop eating when there is more food on your plate.

Second, even when you pay attention to portion size, you also have to consider WHAT you are eating. Even small portions of high-fat, high-calorie foods can interfere with your best intentions for weight control. Take a look at the chart below. You will see what happens if you guess a serving instead of measure a serving. Take the time to become aware of how

much you are eating.

**Serving Size Test Results**

Our test staff *guessed* on serving sizes using the foods shown below. Their guesses for one serving were actually more than one serving! Follow the tips on the right so you can learn how to use actual serving sizes with these common foods.

| Item | Guess | Actual portion | Tip for better portion control |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cereal | 3 cups | 1 cup | Use smaller bowl and measuring cup |
| Cheese | 3 ounces | 1 ounce | Picture 5 dice for a one-ounce portion |
| Meat/poultry | 9 ounces | 3 ounces | Visualize a deck of cards for one serving |
| Bagged snacks | 3-5 ounces | 1 ounce | One or two handfuls; don't eat out of bag |
| Salad dressing | 3-4 ounces | 2 tablespoons | 2 capfuls |
| Ice cream | 3 cups | 1/2 cup | Half-cup scoop; smaller glass; add fruit |
| Butter | 1 tablespoon | 1 teaspoon | Use the tip of your thumb as a guide |

*The 2005 Dietary Guidelines define a portion as, "Portion Size—The amount of a food consumed in one eating occasion."*

## Portion Control Fact Sheet

It's important to pay attention to the portions of food you eat because of the effect on your weight. There are a variety of ways to keep track of portions. The Hand Method is often used by dietitians to help people think about portions. Another method is to "eyeball" the food on a plate and compare it to another visual reference, like a deck of cards. When preparing food at home, you can use measuring tools. Each method is described below followed by a list of portion sizes of some common foods. It may be hard at first to pay attention to portion size, but with time and practice, it will get easier!

Hand Method

A thumb is about the size of 1 ounce of food. Your palm is about the size of 3 ounces of food or one serving of meat. Your fist is equivalent to 1 cup or 8 ounces. For example, a portion of rice as large as your fist is equal to about three servings of rice. The tip of your thumb is the same size as a teaspoon. Using the thumb tip is a good way to keep track of fat portions, such as the amount of margarine that counts as one serving.

Visual References

Here are some common items to use as visual references for portions. A deck of cards is the same size as a 3ounce serving of meat, the recommended amount for a meal. A golf ball is the size of a single ounce of meat. A tennis ball is about the size of a healthy serving of fruit. Four dice equals 1 ounce of cheese. Invent your own visual references for your favorite foods to help with portion control.

Measuring Tools

Measure solid foods such as rice, pasta, or vegetables in a dry measuring cup, which is different from a liquid measuring cup. Measure cooked foods after cooking. Use measuring spoons for fats such as oil, margarine, and salad dressings. Do not use tableware to measure because it may be inaccurate. Use measuring tools to find out how much the cup, glass, and other pieces of dishware you use actually hold. Notice how a serving of food, such as 3 ounces of meat or 1/3 cup of cooked pasta, looks on the plate or bowl you typically use.

It is difficult for the best of us to estimate proper portion sizes. Here are some visuals that can help you Eat Healthy!

**Handful = 1-2 oz.**
Example: 1 oz. nuts = 1 handful or 2 oz. pretzels = 2 handfuls

**Fist = 1cup**
Example: Two servings of pasta or oatmeal

**Palm = 3 oz.** Example: a cooked serving of meat.
(NOT including your fingers or thumb)

**Thumb = 1 oz.**
Example: piece of cheese

**1 fruit serving**= ½ cup canned or 1 medium fruit
(about the size of a tennis ball)

**1 meat, poultry or fish serving= 3 oz**
(about the size of a deck of cards)

**1 grain**= 1 slice bread, pre sliced (about the size of a cassette tape) or
1/2 cup pasta (about the size of an adult woman's palm, stacked 1" high)

**1 dairy serving**=8 ounces
(the size of a container of individual yogurt)

**1 vegetable serving** = 1/2 cup cooked or canned vegetables (about ½ a baseball)


**1 fat serving**= 1 teaspoon (about the size of 4 stacked dimes)

# What is the Difference Between Portions and Servings?

Our expanding waistlines are directly related to our overflowing plates at meal time. We've super-sized what's going into our bodies and it has caught up with us!

What is the difference between portions and servings? A portion is the amount of each food you choose to eat. A serving is a measurement used to describe the amount of food recommended from each food group. It is the amount of food listed on the Nutrition Facts panel you see on the back of packaged foods, cans and drinks. It represents the amount of food recommended in the Dietary Guidelines for all Americans.

By using handy items like this, you can visualize proper portion sizes when it's time to eat. Here are some visuals to help you size up your meals.

3 ounces of meat is the recommended portion for a meal. This portion size is comparable to the size of a deck of cards.

1 ounce of cheese is comparable to four dice.

½ cup of pasta is comparable to a tennis ball.

2 tablespoons of peanut butter is comparable to a ping pong ball.

A medium potato is comparable to a computer mouse.

# Tips for Portion Control

Getting into the habit of controlling your portion sizes isn't as hard as you might think. It all comes down to finding ways to cut calories while continuing to eat the foods you enjoy. So here are seven ways to cut back on super-sized servings and pare down your portions.

**1. Meet yourself half-way.**

You can cut the calories of your favorite foods by 50% without changing anything about them - just eat half. For example, if you usually eat a deli sandwich at lunch, eat half it, but replace your chips with carrot sticks. Still hungry? Before you reach for the rest of your sandwich, munch on a piece of

fruit. Produce takes longer to eat and digest than other foods, which means you'll have more time to notice you're getting full. Plus, the added fiber in both the carrots and fruit will help you feel more satisfied, for much longer, than chips would have.

When you are dining at a restaurant, ask the waiter for a take-out container as soon as he gets your order. Put half of your meal in the box as soon as it arrives. Try to eat slowly and enjoy the conversation and the restaurant's ambiance. Remember, it takes about 20 minutes to start to feel full, so eating at a slower pace will prevent you from overeating. You can always take some of the food back out of the carton at the restaurant if you're still truly hungry, but chances are you won't want to.

2. **Downsize your dinner.**

If heating up leftovers the next day isn't your cup of tea, find out if your eatery offers lunchsized portions of their dishes. These are almost always significantly smaller than full-sized dinner entrees, so don't be afraid to ask if you can purchase the lunch entree at dinner time. If that's not an option, ask to order from the children's menu ... practicing this portion control pointer will save your waistline some inches and your wallet some bucks.

3. **Resist the "upsize" offer.**

As we all know, fast food portions are already oversized, so there's no need to add insult to injury by upgrading your meal. No matter how much of a "better deal" it may seem, don't be tempted. In fact, steering clear of "meal deals" altogether is very wise. You're much better off ordering a grilled chicken sandwich, or even a regular hamburger (hold the mayo on both), along with a side salad, than ordering a combo that comes with a silo-sized soda, too. Kids meals are a good alternative at fast food restaurants; they contain what were considered normal-sized portions for us grown-ups a few decades ago.

4. **Good portions come in small packages.**

If you find your will power is overpowered by a full bag of potato chips sitting in the pantry, don't buy the large bags. Get the individual lunch-sized bags one at a time. (Just don't buy the 12-bag assortment box of chips if you think you'll be tempted to finish off the entire box in a sitting. Mini bags of chips are three for $1 at my grocer, so that is exactly what I limit myself to.) If you're budget-minded, go ahead and buy the full-size bag and divvy out the chips into single serving zipper bags as soon as you get them home; you'll still be much more likely to keep yourself in check than if you were eating from the bag.

5. **Size up servings.**

Just how many of those chips are in a serving? Check the nutrition label to find out -- you may be surprised at how small an actual serving looks compared to what you usually eat. Learn what a serving is of your favorite snacks; start by measuring them out the next few times you eat them. Once you get into the habit of seeing how much a serving really looks like, you'll eventually be able to "eyeball" servings and know how much is too much.

6. **Be gone, buffets!**

My family is the gotta-love-a-bargain sort and going to a buffet used to be a weekly habit. (What could be better than all the food you want at one flat price?) I used to think I could tag along and still keep myself in check by sheer determination. The reality? I have to avoid buffets like the plague. Frankly, it is nearly impossible to practice portion control in an "allyou-can-eat" situation. If you've ever left a buffet feeling sick, just think about how you felt the next time you're tempted to gorge... that's what I do when I feel guilty about not going along.

7. **Compare to control.**

A really nifty way of learning to control portions is to mentally compare them with common, every day objects that you are used to seeing. Some of the reminders I use are that three ounces of meat is the size of a deck of cards or an audio tape; one ounce of meat is the size of a matchbook; and one cup of potatoes, rice or pasta looks like a tennis ball.

# Decode Food Labels

Look closely at what you're eating—it may be unhealthier than you think

If the food industry was honest about what they put in your food, you wouldn't need Eat This, Not That! But the fact is there's a lot hiding in what you eat. Basic nutritional guidelines are helpful—excess fat and calories, bad; protein and fiber, good—but some of the most crucial health information isn't at the top of your food label.

Unpronounceable artificial ingredients are nothing but bad news, and familiar things like salt and sugar also pack a punch. The saltiest dish in America contains almost three times your daily allotment of sodium, and can put you at risk for high blood pressure and stroke. Sugar-laden foods are equally bad for your body—too much of the sweet stuff sends your blood sugar skyrocketing and can up your risk for diabetes. So the next time you're food shopping, read the fine print on these labels, and choose a healthy alternative:

## Health Tip: Reading Food Labels

Reading and understanding the nutrition facts label on food products can help you maintain a well-balanced diet that contains healthy amounts of fat and calories. Here are guidelines to help you interpret food labels, courtesy of the American Academy of Family Physicians:

- Pay attention to the serving size -- usually the first line on the label. The serving size is the manufacturer's estimate of how much a person is likely to eat at one time. If you eat more than the serving size, be sure to increase the label's other values accordingly.
- The percent daily value shows, for each ingredient, how much of that ingredient's recommended daily amount you are getting in each serving.
- Limit foods with unhealthy amounts of saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.
- Favor foods with healthy fiber, vitamins and minerals.

**Examine the Facts**

Follow 3 easy steps for healthful food choices

1. Look at serving size, servings per container and calories.
2. Limit fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sodium.
3. Get enough fiber and important nutrients.

**Nutrition Facts**

Serving Size 1/4 cup (36g)
Servings Per Container: 9

| Amount per serving | |
|---|---|
| **Calories** 60 | Calories from Fat 0 |
| | % Daily Value |
| **Total Fat** 0g | 0% |
| Saturated Fat 0g | 0% |
| *Trans* Fat 0g | |
| **Cholesterol** 0g | 0% |
| **Sodium** 15mg | 1% |
| **Total Carbohydrate** 22g | 7% |
| Dietary Fiber 14g | 56% |
| Sugars 1g | |
| **Protein** 7g | |
| Vitamin A 0% | Vitamin C 0% |
| Calcium 4% | Iron 15% |

(Plato beans, dry)

Eating too many calories per day is linked to overweight, obesity and the development of certain chronic diseases.

Eating too much fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol or sodium may increase your risk for certain chronic diseases.

Eating enough fiber and nutrients can improve your health and help reduce your risk of some diseases.

Daily Value – how a food fits into a daily plan:
- 5% or less is low
- 20% or more is high

**Compare**

Skim Milk / Whole Milk

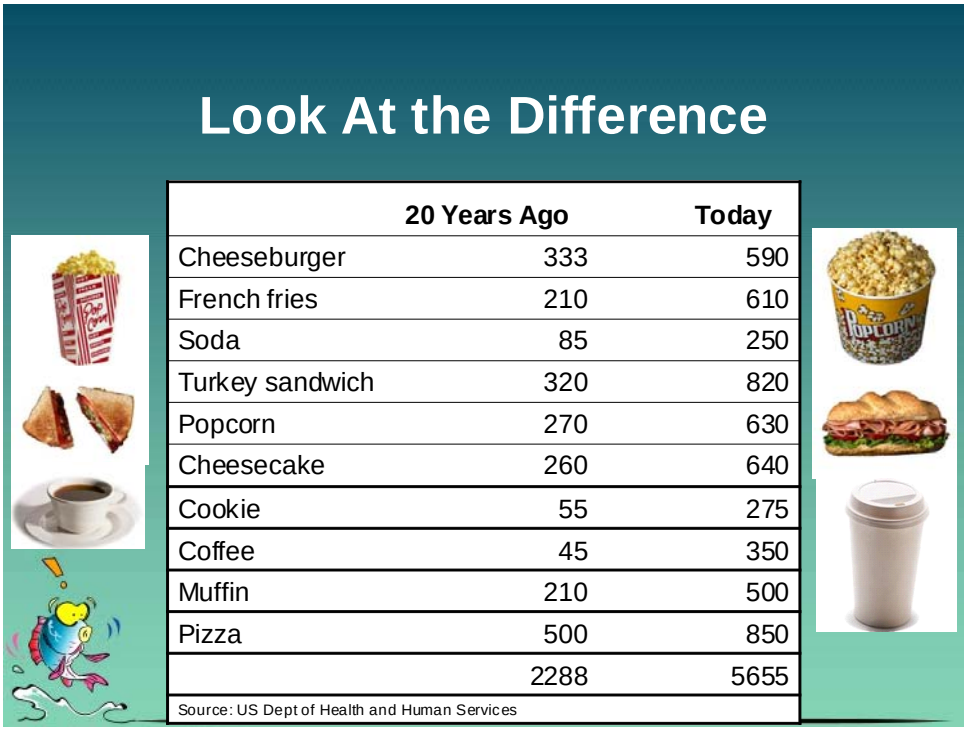
more calories
more total fat
more saturated fat
more cholesterol
less calcium

**Daily Dietary Goals:**

| | |
|---|---|
| - Total fat | 20-35% calories |
| - Saturated fat | Less than 10% calories |
| - Trans fat | Less than 1% calories |
| - Cholesterol | Less than 300 mg |
| - Sodium | Less than 2,300 mg* |
| - Total carbohydrate | 45-65% calories |
| - Dietary fiber | 14 g per 1,000 calories |
| - Protein | 10-35% calories |

For a personal eating program, visit MyPyramid.gov
* Limit sodium to 1,500 mg per day if you have or are at risk for hypertension.
Source: 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

# Portion Sizes Have Increased




| | 20 Years Ago | Today |
|---|---|---|
| Cheeseburger | 333 | 590 |
| French fries | 210 | 610 |
| Soda | 85 | 250 |
| Turkey sandwich | 320 | 820 |
| Popcorn | 270 | 630 |
| Cheesecake | 260 | 640 |
| Cookie | 55 | 275 |
| Coffee | 45 | 350 |
| Muffin | 210 | 500 |
| Pizza | 500 | 850 |
| | 2288 | 5655 |

Source: US Dept of Health and Human Services

Take a look at the total calories for each column. 20 years ago, if you ate all of those items you would consume 2,288 calories versus 5,655 calories - that is more than double!!

Between 1977 and 1996, salty snacks, desserts, soft drinks, burgers, French fries and Mexican food all markedly increased in size and calories, according to a study in a recent issue (January 2004) of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

In restaurants, portions are out of control, with super sizes, all-you-can-eat buffets and huge platters of food delivered to your table. Grocery stores and wholesale clubs want you to “buy more and save more.”

Even at home, plates are bigger, and there’s plenty of room in our refrigerators, freezers, and pantries to store bargain-sized packages of foods.

Studies show that when people are offered larger servings; they tend to eat more calories. It is hard to stop eating when there is more food on your plate! Be aware of what and how much you are eating. Order small when out!

**Avoid 4 Pitfalls of Over-sized Servings:**

1. Eating out of the bag: This makes it very easy to eat much more than one serving. Pouring enough dressing to cover the salad. If you try to visualize just a couple of capfuls, you are much better off.

2. Using too big a bowl. This mistake occurs most often with cereal and ice cream. Start using smaller bowls. Use a measuring cup a few times and pretty soon you will be able to guess right!

3. Slathering enough butter or margarine to really cover the whole slice of bread: Think about the size of your thumb tip and use that much or less when using bread spread.

## Turn your plate into a portion control clock:

Draw an imaginary clock on your plate.

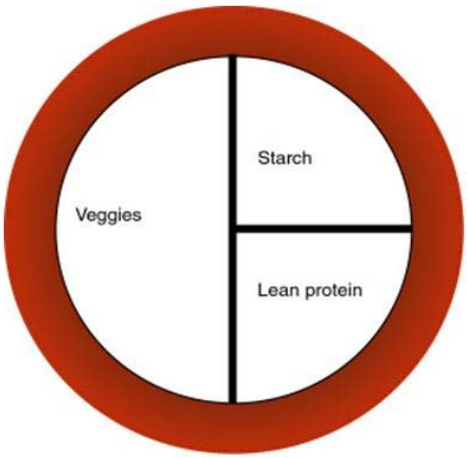
- The area between 12 and 3 is where your starch should go – preferably whole grains! This is one quarter of the plate or about "fifteen minutes."
- The area between 3 and 6 can be for lean meat or poultry, fish or seafood. This is one quarter of the plate or about "fifteen minutes."
- The rest of the plate (between 6 and 12) should be filled with vegetables (and fruits are okay, too). This is one half of the plate or about "thirty minutes."

This strategy will help you eat enough vegetables and not too much of other high-calorie foods.

It helps to start using smaller plates at home. Make a salad on a dinner plate and serve dinner on a salad plate! This strategy will help you eat fewer calories.

## Mini-Sizing Tips

- **Turn your plate into a portion control clock:**
  - **Draw an imaginary clock on the plate**
  - **The area between 12 and 3 is where your starch should go**
  - **The area between 3 and 6 can be for lean protein**
  - **The rest of the plate (between 6 and 12) should be filled with vegetables**




**When eating away from home…**

- Share an entrée
- Split your meal in half; put half in a doggie bag right away to take home for another meal
- Order appetizer sizes when possible
- Order the smallest size (the MINI-size!)

**Downsize eating out…**

- Skip the bread basket
- Share an entrée
- Put half in a takeout container for another meal
- Order appetizer sizes
- Soup and salad are plenty
- Order the smallest size

# Big + Baked = Diet Mistake

Most baked goods sold in coffee stores are HUGE. And that means the calories they contain are quite hefty. If you ate one of everything listed in the Starbucks nutritional guide you would consume over 32,000 calories. That sounds like a lot, but you would only need to eat one item a day for 80 days to get to that amount of calories!! Everyday decisions can have a great impact on your waist over time.

Most bagels, cookies, brownies, bars, muffins and cakes offered in restaurants and coffee stores are upwards of 400 calories each. The large sizes are appealing to consumers because they think they are getting a value. Since most of the cost of these items is labor cost, it is very appealing for vendors to offer large items for more money.

What is the solution? Buy small! Take a look at the items on the bottom chart. They are smaller and contain far fewer calories than their jumbo counterparts in the top chart.

| Starbucks Fresh Baked Goods | Size (g) | calories | fat |
|---|---|---|---|
| Caramel Pecan Sticky Roll | 184 | **730** | 40 |
| Chocolate Peanut Butter Stack | 142 | **670** | 42 |
| Crumb Cake | 163 | **670** | 32 |
| Cinnamon Roll | 170 | **620** | 29 |
| Seven Layer Bar | 133 | **600** | 37 |
| Caramel Brownie | 126 | **580** | 36 |
| Classic Coffee Cake | 139 | **570** | 28 |
| Iced Carrot Pound Cake | 177 | **540** | 13 |
| Butterscotch Pecan Scone | 120 | **520** | 27 |
| Chocolate Marshmallow Bar | 113 | **510** | 27 |
| Cinnamon Chip Scone with Icing | 128 | **510** | 23 |
| Iced Lemon Pound Cake | 142 | **500** | 23 |
| Maple Oat Scone with Icing | 128 | **490** | 22 |
| Orange Poppy Pound Cake | 122 | **490** | 27 |
| Pecan Diamond | 86 | **490** | 37 |
| Holiday Gingerbread | 126 | **480** | 16 |
| White Chocolate Macadamia Nut Cookie | 99 | **470** | 27 |
| Blueberry Scone | 128 | **460** | 18 |
| Cheese Danish with Mocha Swirls | 120 | **460** | 28 |

# Walking for Fitness: How to Trim your Waistline, Improve your Health

"Walking is man's best medicine." –Hippocrates

Hippocrates must have been a smart guy! There's a wealth of research to prove that walking is good for you and the results are impressive: major reductions in both diabetes and heart disease, decreases in high blood pressure, increases in bone density, and more all follow regular walking exercise.

Walking is a gentle, low-impact exercise that can ease you into a higher level of fitness and health. Walking is one of your body's most natural forms of exercise. It's safe, simple, doesn't require practice, and the health benefits are many. Here's more about why walking is good for you, and how to get started with a walking program.

**What are the top 10 reasons to walk?**

1. Walking prevents type 2 diabetes. The Diabetes Prevention Program showed that walking 150 minutes per week and losing just 7% of your body weight (12-15 pounds) can reduce your risk of diabetes by 58%.
2. Walking strengthens your heart if you're male. In one study, mortality rates among retired men who walked less than one mile per day were nearly twice that among those who walked more than two miles per day.
3. Walking strengthens your heart if you're female. Women in the Nurse's Health Study (72,488 female nurses) who walked three hours or more per week reduced their risk of a heart attack or other coronary event by 35% compared with women who did not walk.
4. Walking is good for your brain. In a study on walking and cognitive function, researchers found that women who walked the equivalent of an easy pace at least 1.5 hours per week had significantly better cognitive function and less cognitive decline than women who walked less than 40 minutes per week. Think about that!
5. Walking is good for your bones. Research shows that postmenopausal women who walk approximately one mile each day have higher whole-body bone density than women who walk shorter distances, and walking is also effective in slowing the rate of bone loss from the legs.
6. Walking helps alleviate symptoms of depression. Walking for 30 minutes, three to five times per week for 12 weeks reduced symptoms of depression as measured with a standard depression questionnaire by 47%.
7. Walking reduces the risk of breast and colon cancer. Women who performed the equivalent of one hour and 15 minutes to two and a half hours per week of brisk walking had an 18% decreased risk of breast cancer compared with inactive women. Many studies have shown that exercise can prevent colon cancer, and even if an individual person develops colon cancer, the benefits of exercise appear to continue both by increasing quality of life and reducing mortality.
8. Walking improves fitness. Walking just three times a week for 30 minutes can significantly increase cardio-respiratory fitness.
9. Walking in short bouts improves fitness, too! A study of sedentary women showed that short bouts of brisk walking (three 10-minute walks per day) resulted in similar improvements in fitness and were at least as effective in decreasing body fatness as long bouts (one 30-minute walk per day).
10. Walking improves physical function. Research shows that walking improves fitness and physical function and prevents physical disability in older persons.

The list goes on, but if I continued, there'd be no time for you to start walking! Suffice to say that walking is certainly good for you!

**How many calories will I burn walking?**

A 150-pound man burns 100 calories per mile; a 200-pund man burns 133 calories per mile; and a 250-pound man burns 166 calories per mile. You burn virtually the same number of calories whether you run or walk a mile; you just get there faster if you run. See below for a chart of calories burned during walking at different speeds and body weight.

What's a good average walking speed?

- A good average walking speed is 3 to 4 miles per hour (mph) and depends on your leg length and how quickly you can move your legs.
- You may need to start at a slower pace if you're out of shape, but you will build up quickly if you walk regularly.
- Once you exceed 4 mph, it gets tricky because you don't know if you should walk or run. Proper speed-walking technique will help at fast speeds.
- Treadmill and outdoor walking yield the same benefits. Set the elevation to 1% to mimic outdoor walking.

How much walking should I do?

There are two exercise recommendations in the United States.

1. The Surgeon General recommends 30 minutes or more of accumulated moderate intensity physical activity on five or more days per week to improve health and fitness. "Accumulated" means you can do it in shorter bouts throughout the day (for example, 10- or 15-minute intervals throughout the day), and "moderate intensity" means you feel warm and slightly out of breath when you do it. Walking counts!

   Here are some suggestions to incorporate walking into your day and accumulate 30 minutes. Think about your day and how you can increase walking.

   - Get off the bus before your destination (you may even save time this way).
   - Park your car farther from the store.
   - Take a walk at lunch instead of having your food delivered.
   - Walk for errands instead of driving short distances.
   - Get rid of your riding lawnmower!
   - Keep your walking shoes handy. Leave a pair at your office for quick 10-minute stress-reducing walks.

2. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends 20-60 minutes of continuous activity, three to five times a week, at 60%-90% of maximum heart rate, and two to three days of resistance training. Walking counts!

**Preparation helps avoid injury**
Take time to prepare yourself to prevent injuries, such as blisters on your feet or muscle pain.

**Wear walking shoes and comfortable, protective clothing**
Before you set out, be sure to select comfortable footwear. Also dress in loosefitting, comfortable clothing and in layers if you need to adjust to changing temperature. If you walk outside, choose clothes appropriate for the weather. Avoid rubberized materials, as they don't allow perspiration to evaporate. Wear bright colors or reflective tape after dark so that motorists can see you.

**Warm up**
Spend about five minutes walking slowly to warm up your muscles. You can walk in place if you want. Increase your pace until you feel warm.

**Stretch**
After warming up, stretch your muscles before walking. Include the calf stretch, quadriceps stretch, hamstring stretch and side (iliotibial) stretch.

**Cool down after each walking session**
To reduce stress on your heart and muscles, end each walking session by walking slowly for about five minutes. Then, repeat your stretches.

**Getting started: Focus on the basics**

- **Start slow and easy.** If you're a seasoned walker, keep doing what you're doing. If you've been inactive and tire easily, it's best to start slow and easy. At first, walk only as far or as fast as you find comfortable. If you can walk for only a few minutes, let that be your starting point. For example, you might try short daily sessions of five to 10 minutes and slowly build up to 15 minutes twice a week. Then, over several weeks' time, you can gradually work your way up to 30 to 60 minutes of walking most days each week.

- **Use proper technique.** Walking is a great exercise because it's so simple to do. But using the correct posture and movements is essential.
- **Measure the intensity of your workout.** As you walk, measure the intensity of your workout by checking your heart rate. Knowing your heart rate allows you to increase the intensity to maximize your workout or slow down to avoid overdoing it.

To find out if you're exercising within the range of your target heart rate, stop walking to check your pulse manually at your wrist (radial artery) or neck (carotid artery). Another option is to wear an electronic device that displays your heart rate.

**Set goals, track progress, stay motivated for success**
The good news is that walking — even only a modest amount — provides health benefits. For maximum benefits, work your way up to 30 to 60 minutes a day within your target heart rate zone, most days of the week.

To achieve these benefits, it can help to set goals, track your progress and take steps to stay motivated.

**Set realistic goals**
If your goal is to walk two hours a day 365 days a year, you might be setting yourself up to fail. Set realistic goals for yourself, such as 30 minutes five days a week.
And you don't need to do it all at once. Build walking into your schedule today. Just do it. For example, walk for 10 minutes on your lunch break.

**Track progress**
Keeping a record of how many steps you take, the distance you walk and how long it takes can help you see where you started from and serve as a source of inspiration. Just think how good you'll feel when you see how many miles you've walked each week, month or year.
Record these numbers in a walking journal you create for yourself or log them in a spreadsheet on your computer. Another option is to use an electronic device — such as a pedometer — to calculate time and distance for you.

**Stay motivated**
Starting a walking program takes initiative. Sticking with it takes commitment. But when you think of the potential health benefits, it's well worth your effort. Over time you'll likely feel more invigorated. To stay motivated:

- **Make it fun.** If you don't like walking alone, invite your spouse, partner, friend or neighbor to join you. You might also join a health club and use a treadmill.
- **Vary your routine.** Plan several different walking routes for variety. But if you're walking alone, be sure to tell someone which route you're taking.

Sometimes things happen to keep you from sticking to a regular walking program. Don't be too hard on yourself when this happens. You don't have to let a few days off sabotage your plan to reach a higher level of fitness and improved health. Just revisit your goals and get walking.

**You'll be glad you started**
Even though the first steps of any journey can be the most difficult, it helps to keep your goals foremost in your mind. So remember, once you take that first step, you're on the way to an important destination — better health.

***Small Changes = BIG results***

***Fitness Action:***
***Start walking 20 minutes 3 times a week – starting THIS WEEK! Then build up to 30 minutes a day!***