



# Let's Get Moving!

## A Walking Program for Congregations

Presbyterians, like many of our colleagues and neighbors, tend to live rather sedentary lives. We often sit behind desks or around committee tables exercising our minds, but not our bodies. This life-style, combined with a life-long opportunity to eat as often and as much as we like, can contribute to our individual "girth" and place us at increased risk for cardiovascular events and diabetes.

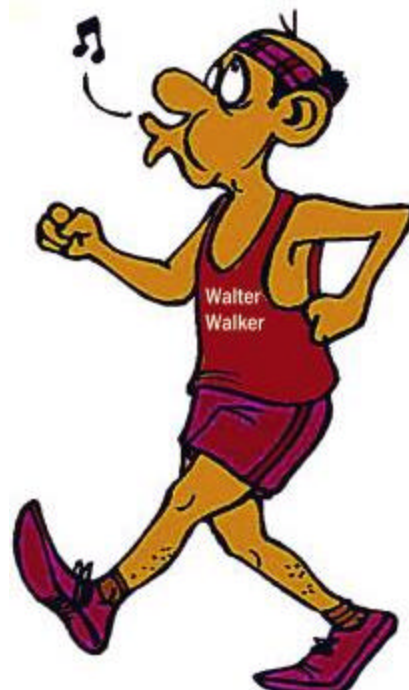
Walking programs are an ideal way for congregations to focus on an opportunity for individual Presbyterians to practice good stewardship of our own bodies and health – collectively. Many congregations are already using walking as an activity and some have formal walking programs in place. **Let's Get Moving** is an option for those who wish to have a more formalized program.

According to some sources, the rate of walking has dropped by 42 percent over the past 20 years. Over that same period, the number of overweight people in the US has increased by 40 percent.

The health benefits of walking are astonishing. Not only does walking help reduce stress, it also reduces the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, and breast or colon cancer.

Walking stimulates the brain to release endorphins, the body's natural opiates, which can make you feel better about life right away. It also stimulates the brain to increase production of the neurotransmitter serotonin, another potent mood elevator.

Walking requires neither club membership nor pre-certification/approval from your healthcare insurance provider. The weather is warming, green is re-emerging and there is no better time to take a deep breath, clear the winter fog from our lungs and **MOVE!**



**Please check with your physician or see a health professional for evaluation before you begin any strenuous exercise program.**

# Let's Get Moving!

This **Walking Program** is for and about exercise. It is not about weight loss. It is not about diet. (Although eating a balanced diet, and, finding and maintain one's optimal weight are also important.) It will provide everything you need to plan and implement a Congregational Walking Program, the goal of which is **PARTICIPATION**.

The popularity of walking as a fitness activity is growing - as is the list of health benefits brought about by walking. Survey research tells us that folks are more likely to comply with an exercise program if it can be incorporated easily into their day, if the experience itself is enjoyable, and if it involves a social component. An eight-year study of 13,000 people found that those who walked 30 minutes a day had a significantly lower risk of premature death than those who rarely exercised. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

## A regular walking program can help:



- ⦿ Decrease your risk of a heart attack. Walking keeps your heart healthy by lowering low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol) and raising high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol (the "good" cholesterol). Regular exercise can also help keep your blood pressure in check, and it reduces your risk of blood clots and irregular heartbeats.
- ⦿ Decrease your chance of developing diabetes. Exercising regularly will reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes (formerly called adult-onset or noninsulin-dependent diabetes). If you have diabetes, regular exercise may help decrease the amount of insulin or other medications that you need to control your diabetes.
- ⦿ Help control your weight. Taking a brisk one-hour walk burns approximately 400 calories for the average person.
- ⦿ Improve your muscle tone. Walking leads to lean, toned muscles, keeping you flexible and active as you get older.
- ⦿ Promote your overall sense of wellness. Going for a walk is a great way to reduce stress. Regular walking can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, keeping you emotionally healthy.
- ⦿ Enhance bone strength and prevent osteoporosis and arthritis. Exercise can help you build strong bones and slow bone loss. Exercise will benefit your bones no matter

when you start. Strength training enables you to strengthen muscles and bones in your arms and upper spine, while weight-bearing exercises — such as walking, jogging, running, stair climbing, skipping rope, skiing and impact-producing sports — mainly affect the bones in your legs, hips and lower spine.

- Increase your metabolism. Purposeful walking for 30 to 60 minutes daily can substantially increase energy expenditure. Regular walking can help control weight. Walking at an even pace for 1 hour burns about 350 calories, while walking briskly and moving your arms with each stride can burn as much as 500 calories, depending upon your metabolism. In order to increase your metabolism, you need to workout nearly every day. And, the higher your metabolism, the faster you burn calories. Once you increase your metabolism, you will continue to burn calories even after you have finished exercising. Imagine burning calories even while you sleep!
- Walking can help ease back discomfort. In one study, 64% of people reported a substantial decrease in back pain after instituting an exercise therapy program like walking.
- Walking boosts energy levels. Just ten minutes of brisk walking is enough to boost your mood and energy for 1 to 2 hours. Studies show that those who exercise have more energy and a lower incidence of illness.

## **Why should my congregation begin a walking program?**

Aside from the tremendous health benefits of walking as a form of exercise, a walking program is the perfect way for a group within the congregation to unite around a common goal - change those sedentary ways and start exercising.

- ▣ Walking programs are simple to start; someone just needs to take the initiative.
- ▣ Walking programs do not require the services of “fitness” professional to organize and run. They are very cost efficient.
- ▣ Walking programs can appeal to and involve persons of any or all age groups.
- ▣ Walking programs can involve people who are differently abled.
- ▣ Walking programs are collective rather than competitive – they are not about speed or endurance, they are about participation.
- ▣ Walking programs require no equipment (except comfortable, seasonally/temperature appropriate clothes and proper & properly fitting shoes).
- ▣ Walking programs can happen anytime – morning, lunch-time, afternoon after work, evening, and on whatever schedule (3, 4, 5 times per week) is practical
- ▣ Walking programs can happen outside or inside (in urban areas malls are perfect during low traffic times of day). Parks and country roads are great, too.
- ▣ Walking programs can be combined with another totally unrelated activities and can be added to meetings (before or after).

## **Walking Plus**

Walking programs can also include a more traditional programmatic component. Use a meditative or scripture reading (the daily reading from the Common Lectionary can work)

with the group prior to the “walking” portion of the program. As participants are walking, suggest that they consider and reflect on the reading (the endorphins stimulated by the exercise should reinforce the thought processes) and at the conclusion of the walk, take time for the group to share and discuss individual reflections over juice.

## Gathering your participant group

If you are willing to help get a walking program organized, find at least one other person who is willing to help you in the effort and:

- Place a note in the bulletin/newsletter about the prospective program and see who might be interested.
- Use the enclosed posters to advertise the walking program on a bulletin board
- Use a “Minute for Mission” to present the walking program as a way of practicing good stewardship of our health and body
- Get together as a group to see what will fit most schedules
- Make a commitment as to the number of times each week your group is willing to devote 30-45 minute time segments.
- Decide where you will walk. Find a place that will be enjoyable for walking.
- Choose a meaningful name, theme or symbolic destination. Members of Lakeside Presbyterian Church set the distance to Jerusalem as their “goal.” The members walked until their cumulative total reached 6,675 miles.
- Demonstrate your commitment to your community’s issues by participating in “walks” as a group.
- Outfit your participants with cool and **Sweat Free**® tee shirts carrying the National Health Ministries Logo. They are designed so that you can add your group name, as well. Call 1.888.728.7228, ext 5787 to order.



## Beginning the Program – Properly and in Order!

Once you have decided when and where your walking program will be held, hold an “orientation” program for the participants and get everyone ready to **MOVE!**

Much of the following information will be helpful for your orientation, particularly for members who have not participated in walking as a formal exercise. Individuals will want to have copies of the log sheets (there are a couple of options) and may also want basic information about walking to take and read on their own.

When you walk for fitness, you need to do it right - properly and in order - if you want to maximize calorie burn and prevent injuries. To check your technique, have a friend watch you walk, or stride on a treadmill in front of a mirror.

## Essentials for Safe & Effective Walking

**The walking program suggested here utilizes a combination of slow and brisk walking, allowing adequate time for warming up and cooling down – even as the length of brisk walking is increased.**

1. Always warm up, stretch, and cool down during your walking session.
2. Begin by walking at a low intensity for 5-10 minutes (warm-up) and then stretch your calves, quadriceps, hamstrings, hips, and low back muscles. Do not forget to stretch your back, shoulders, and arms. These stretches will help to loosen up any tension you may be carrying and make your walk more enjoyable and effective.
3. Then move to the brisk walk as suggested on the log sheets. The times increase as you work through the program.
4. Do not worry about speed. Walk at a comfortable pace. If you cannot catch your breath or converse, you are walking too fast. Slow down or avoid hills.
5. Pay close attention to how you feel. If you feel sore or have aches the next day, listen to your body and take it easy. Just the same, if you feel great and need more of a challenge, go ahead and increase the duration and speed.
6. Use good technique. As you walk, be sure to keep your back straight and your abdominal muscles tight, and "pump" your arms back and forth. Keep your head up and shoulders relaxed, and breathe deeply.

### How can you assess your technique?

Look 6 feet in front of you as you walk. Keep your head level, with your ears over your shoulders. Keep your shoulders dropped, not hunched. Keep your abdominal muscles firm but not so tight that you cannot breathe. Lift up and out of your hips to allow more swivel. Tuck your pelvis slightly by bringing your belly button back toward your spine. Point your knees and toes forward, keeping your feet parallel. Push off with your back foot, and roll from heel to toe as you walk. Avoid walking on the inside or outside of your feet.

7. At the end of your walking session, cool down by walking at a low intensity for another 5-10 minutes, and then stretch the same muscle groups again.

Note: It is important to gradually increase the duration of your sessions before you increase their intensity. When beginning a walking program, you should be more concerned with increasing the number of minutes of the exercise session before you increase your speed or attempt terrain that is more difficult.

Walking is one fitness activity that allows you numerous options. Once you have reached a point where you can walk a few miles with relative ease, you can start to vary the intensity.

Walking hills, in addition to increasing your cardiovascular endurance, is a great way to tone the legs. Concentrate on lengthening your stride or increasing your speed. And do not forget to reward yourself after each workout with a few minutes of relaxing stretches to help prevent sore muscles.

Listening to lively music while you walk is also a great way to energize your workout. However, if you wear headphones, keep the volume down and watch out for traffic that you may not hear.

Keep track of your progress. Many experts recommend that you walk a minimum of 20 minutes a day. Nevertheless, there are no hard and fast rules. Fit walking into your schedule whenever you can. That may mean two 10-minute walks each day, or even hour-long walks two to three times a week. The best schedule is one that keeps you walking and keeps you fit!

There are 4 types of walking:

1. Lifestyle Walking: Casual walking when you stroll through the park or mall
2. Fitness Walking: Treadmill or a brisk walk through the neighborhood
3. High-Energy Walk: Race walking at a lightning-quick pace
4. Walk/Run: Alternating running and walking intervals to spike intensity

Choose what is right for you.

## Is it a shoe-in?



When shopping for walking shoes, you'll want to look for good shock absorption in the heel of the shoe and under the ball of your foot. A walking shoe is more rigid than a running shoe and is designed to provide a rocker effect, or enhanced roll from heel to toe. Look for sturdy shoes that fit your feet well, both in length and in width. If possible, purchase your shoes at a store staffed with professional shoe fitters or people experienced in your sport. Finding shoes that fit you properly will help you avoid injuries that can result from ill-fitting shoes.

Tips:

- ~Have both your feet measured. Your feet expand while bearing weight, so make sure you're standing when they're measured.
- ~Try on shoes after a workout or at the end of the day.
- ~Wear athletic socks similar to those you'll wear during the sport.
- ~Try on both shoes and check the fit. Make sure your heel fits snugly. Wiggle your toes. If you don't have a half-inch between your longest toe and the end of the shoe – approximately the width of your thumb – try a larger size.
- ~Test for comfort by walking or jogging a few steps. If the shoes don't feel comfortable right away, try another pair.
- ~Have your feet measured regularly.

## More facts about the value of walking!

If you still have not sold your group on the value of adding this program, here are some additional facts about walking .

- ⓪ On average, every minute of walking can extend your life by 1.5 to 2 minutes.
- ⓪ That is almost a 2 for 1 trade-off!
- ⓪ Walking an extra 20 minutes each day will burn off 7 pounds of body fat per year.
- ⓪ To burn off 1 plain M&M candy, you need to walk the full length of a football field. Think about that next time you dip your hand into a candy bowl at someone's office!
- ⓪ Longer, moderately paced daily walks (40 minutes at 60% to 65% maximum heart rate) are best for losing weight.
- ⓪ Shorter, faster walks (20-25 minutes at 75% to 85% maximum heart rate) are best for conditioning your heart and lungs.
- ⓪ Exercise the capacity to protect and even enhance the immune response. Experimental studies have shown that a regular exercise program of brisk walking can bolster many defenses of the immune system, including the antibody response and the natural killer (T cell) response. Fortunately, the intensity and duration of exercise needed to support the immune system is less than that needed to provide the best cardiovascular training.

### Remember, walking provides the following benefits:

- ? Improves efficiency of your heart and lungs
- ? Burns body fat
- ? Raises your metabolism so you are burning calories faster, even while you rest
- ? Helps control your appetite
- ? Increases your energy
- ? Helps relieve stress
- ? Slows aging
- ? Reduces levels of cholesterol in your blood
- ? Lowers high blood pressure
- ? Helps control and prevent diabetes
- ? Reduces risk of some forms of cancer including colorectal, prostate, and breast
- ? Aids rehabilitation from heart attack and stroke
- ? Promotes intestinal regularity
- ? Helps promote restful sleep
- ? Strengthens muscles of your legs, hips, and torso
- ? Strengthens your bones and reduces bone density loss in older women
- ? Reduces stiffness in your joints due to inactivity or arthritis
- ? Relieves most cases of chronic backache
- ? Improves flexibility and posture
- ? Promotes healthier skin due to increased circulation
- ? Improves mental alertness and memory
- ? Spurs intellectual creativity and problem solving
- ? Elevates mood
- ? Helps prevent and/or reduce depression
- ? Improves your self-esteem
- ? Increases sexual vigor
- ? Decreases need for nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, and other unhealthy substances

## The Top Ten Common Walking Mistakes\*

### #1: Over-striding

Walking the right way can give you better health, fitness, and attitude. It can help you walk faster and more smoothly. Walking the wrong way can lead to wasted effort or even injury.

When walkers try to walk faster, a natural inclination is to lengthen your stride in front, reaching out further with your forward foot. This leads to a clumsy, ungainly gait, striking hard with the feet and causing pain in the shins.

All of the power of your walk comes from pushing with the back leg and foot. If you are trying to walk fast, concentrate on taking shorter, quicker steps. Then think of really rolling through your step with your back foot and leg, getting a good push off. The result will be faster feet and lengthening your stride where it does you some good - in back.



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### #2 Wearing the wrong shoes

Do not walk in shoes that are too heavy or too stiff. Get fit for the right shoes at a technical running shoe store in your area. The athletic shoe experts will make sure you get the right shoe- flexible enough for walking, sized right for the swelling everyone's feet have while walking.

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### #3 Flapping, Slapping Feet

Your feet hit the ground with a slap as you land flat-footed with each step, getting no roll. You may develop shin pain. This means that instead of rolling through the step with your forward foot, it is flattening out prematurely. Either you are fighting stiff, heavy shoes or your shins are too weak to let you roll through the step.

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### #4 No Arm Motion

A normal walking motion uses the arms to counterbalance the leg motion. A walker can add power and speed by using the arms effectively. Long, straight arms act like a long pendulum, slowing you down. Bend your arms 90 degrees and swing them naturally back and forth opposite the leg motion

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### #5 Chicken Winging your arms

Never swing our arms from side to side, or cross the center of your body and extending out to endanger passersby. Keep your elbows close to your body and swing your arms mostly back and forward, as if reaching for your wallet from a back pocket on the backstroke.

This motion lets you concentrate on power from your rear leg without wasting motion in front of your body.

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### #6 Walking with your head down

Do not walk with your head down, staring at your feet. Look up! Be proud. Good posture for walking allows you to breathe well and provides a long bodyline to prevent problems with your back, neck, and shoulders. Your chin should be parallel to the ground.

Your eyes should focus on the street or track 10 - 20 feet ahead.

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## #7 Leaning

Leaning forward or backwards or holding your back swayed can all result in back pain and do not contribute to speed or good technique. Stand up straight but with relaxed shoulders, chin up and parallel to the ground. Think about walking tall. Think "suck in your gut, tuck in your butt." Your back should have a natural curve; do not force it into an unnatural sway with behind out back stomach out forward. [Strengthen your abdominal muscles through sit-ups and other exercises so you are able to hold yourself straighter.]

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## #8 The Wrong Clothes

If you walk at or after dark, even in well-lighted areas, wear light colored clothing and reflective stripes or vests. Wear layered clothes so that you can adjust to the air temperature and your generated warmth. If you are sensitive to the sun, walk after sundown, or wear protective lotions.

[Note: Many running shoes have reflective elements, but studies show it is best to have several reflective elements on to be seen from all directions.]

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## #9 Not Drinking Enough Water

Drink a glass of water every hour throughout the day to stay hydrated. Ten minutes before your walk, drink a glass of water. During your walk, drink a cup or more of water every 20 minutes. After you finish, drink a glass or two of water.

Avoid beverages containing caffeine before your walk, they cause you to lose fluid, making you more thirsty as well as making you take inconvenient stops along the way.

On walks over 2 hours, use an electrolyte-replacement sports drink and drink when thirsty. On long distance walks, drink when thirsty and be sure to replenish salt with a sports drink rather than drinking only water.

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## #10 Over-training

If you have lost your enthusiasm, feel tired, achy and irritable. You may be overdoing it.

Take a day off now and then to let your body repair, build up muscle, and store up some energy to get you back on the road again. If you just cannot stand a true day off, do some upper body weight training instead of walking and lower body work.

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\* Top Ten Common Walking Mistakes Adapted From Wendy Bumgardner, Your Guide to Walking.

Other information included in this program was adapted from "Fit Facts – American Council of Exercise, Mayo Clinic-Fitness & Sports Medicine Center, Cleveland Clinic and the American Heart Association.



Let's Get Moving® was developed by  
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# Let's Get Moving! A Walking Program for Congregations

## 12-Week Walking Program – You will need a copy for each participant (Includes at least three exercise sessions during each week of the program)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Warm Up	Activity	Cool Down	Total Time
<b>Week 1</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Then walk briskly 5 min.	Then walk slowly 5 min. 15 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 2</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 7 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 17 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 3</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 9 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 19 min. /Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 4</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 11 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 21 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 5</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 13 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 23 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 6</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 15 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 25 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 7</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 18 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 28 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 8</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 20 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 30 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 9</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 23 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 33 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 10</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 26 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 36 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 11</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 28 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 38 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	
<b>Week 12</b>	Walk slowly 5 min.	Walk briskly 30 min.	Walk slowly 5 min. 40 min./Total
First Walking Session []	Second Walking Session []	Third Walking Session []	



# Let's Get Moving!

## A Walking Program for Our Congregation

A regular walking program can help:

- Reduce blood cholesterol
- Lower blood pressure
- Increase cardiovascular endurance
- Enhance bone strength
- Burn calories and keep weight down

And, Walking Programs are enjoyable!!!!

A Congregational Walking Program is forming now.

If you are interested in participating, please contact:

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_

At: (phone) \_\_\_\_\_, e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



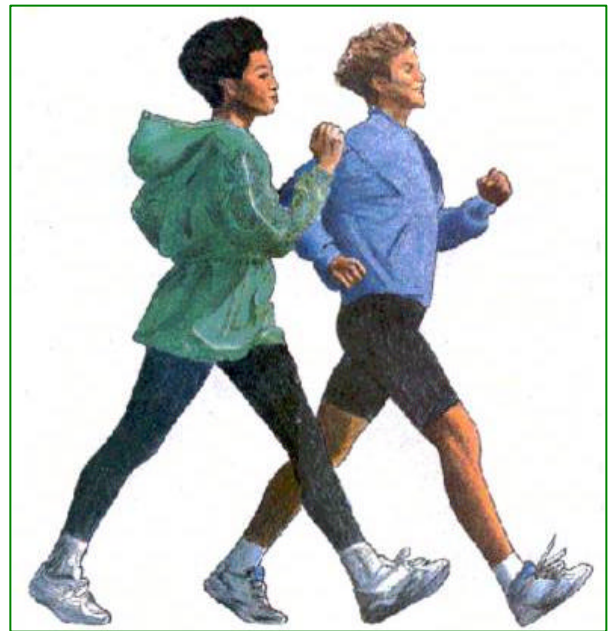
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