Walking Workouts: Walking as Exercise

Hippocrates once said, “Walking is man’s best medicine.” Let’s assume he meant that for women, too! And on The Early Show on Thursday, April 30, 2009, Leslie Sansone, fitness guru and creator of the Walk at Home program (www.exercisetv.tv/startwalking), offered a lesson to students on staying fit by doing just that.

Walking is one of the best forms of exercise, but with unsafe roads and bad weather, holding to a consistent walking aerobic workout can be difficult. Sansone showed how you can get yourself an effective exercise regiment at home by walking in place:

Boost Energy For Weight Loss

Even if you’re physically tired, exercise can make you mentally alert. It causes your heart to pump and increases oxygen and endorphin levels. It’s no surprise that exercise is the best most foolproof metabolism booster ever. It works every time. Aim for 3-5 sessions a week for 30 minutes.

Exercise, such as walking briskly indoors or out, will not only boost your energy, it will also increase your daily calorie burn.

Muscles directly affect metabolism because they require energy even at times of rest. You can build muscle during your walks by carrying light weights or by using a resistance band as you walk. The more muscle you have, the higher your calorie requirements. A healthy eating plan combined with physical activity will rev up your metabolism and keep it going. So, eat right and get moving.

Why Walking is Good
First of all, it’s a great way to introduce regular exercise into your daily routine. It’s not hard to substitute walking for driving if you leave enough time for yourself. It works your leg muscles out. It is free, anyone can do it, and walking has the lowest fall out rate of any exercise program. Great way to get in a workout for any fitness level and no need for buying equipment. The great thing about walking is that you can’t really do it wrong is because it is all about getting up and moving your body and getting active, which is a step in a right direction.

Walking is by far the most popular low impact exercise, but in order to get your heart rate up there are some things you may need to do.

If you like walking try:

Walk faster. One mistake we often make is walking too slowly to get the heart rate up. Picking up the pace can help you up the intensity of your workouts.

Try interval training. By adding short bursts of speed or an occasional steep hill to your walking workouts, you can increase the intensity of your workouts as well as your calorie-burn. Try one of a hill simulation on the Treadmill if you are using one, or try a neighborhood hill. Make sure you’re not holding onto the treadmill and, when you’re outside, swing your arms to keep the intensity up. Holding weights as you walk is a no-no (it can cause injury), but consider using walking poles as an alternative.

Mix things up. If walking is your sole source of cardio, cross-train with other activities to keep your body challenged. Walking is something we do every day and, therefore, we’re very good at it. Learning something you’re not as adept at can be a great boost to your endurance and fat loss.

What you’ll typically achieve after six easy weeks are:
You’ll drop 15 pounds of ugly fat!
You’ll gain 5 pounds of metabolism-boosting muscle!
You’ll burn an extra 200 calories a day… just by being in better shape!
You’ll lower your risk of heart disease by a whopping 45 percent!
You’ll lower your risk of stroke 42 percent!
You’ll lower your blood pressure by 10 points!
You’ll lower your total cholesterol by 10 percent!
You’ll raise your “good” cholesterol (HDL) by 5 percent!
You’ll lower your risk of diabetes by a super 58 percent!
You’ll lower your risk of an early death by a joyous 55 percent!

So, it sure looks like Hippocrates was right - walking is your best medicine.

2 common mistakes:
Don’t walk fast enough for cardiovascular health get yourself a great CD to keep the beat up and you get a cardio workout and higher calorie burn. Another mistake people make is they don’t keep track of how far they are walking and don’t get the same sense of accomplishment when you know how far you have gone. Use a pedometer.

Why walk at home?
The great thing about doing aerobic walking at home is that you get a chance to really work aerobically without looking silly in public. Also, walking does not work out all that many muscles. If you follow a routine with side stepping, high stepping and kicks, you can get maximum muscle workout on the lower and top half of your body. Walking program is convenient. You cannot always get outside to get your walks in due to bad weather, unsafe roads and areas, and the fact that maybe you want privacy so Start! Walking keeps you from “falling off” your healthy walking plan and gets you walking right in your own home.

PAIR Up to PARE Down!
Motivation is a key factor in a successful fitness program. Sometimes, finding that motivation is your biggest challenge. Studies report that you’re more likely to stick to an exercise plan if you have a workout buddy. The most successful partnerships are those that have similar schedules and goals.