WHY WALK?

• 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%.

• 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.

• 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.

• Walking helps symptoms of depression.
Walking for 30 minutes three to five times per week for 12 weeks reduced symptoms of depression.

• Walking improves fitness.
Walking just three times a week for 30 minutes can increase cardiorespiratory fitness.

• Walking improves physical function.
Research shows that walking improves fitness and physical function and prevents disability in older persons.

www.stonybrook.edu/healthieru
Source: www.medicinenet.com/walking/article.htm

You may already know how to walk, but here are some extra tips!

WALKING POSTURE

• Stand up straight
• Do not arch your back
• Do not lean forward or backward (this can put strain on back muscles)
• Keep your eyes looking ahead of you, not down
• Chin up about parallel to the ground (this reduces strain on the neck and back)
• Pull in your stomach
• Keep your shoulders slightly back (Shrug once and let your shoulders fall and relax to find the correct positioning)
• Allow your waist to twist as you walk
• Rotate your hips forward and tuck in your behind just a bit to keep from arching your back

STRIDE

• Avoid over-striding, which is taking longer steps to increase speed; it is inefficient and potentially harmful
• Take more, smaller steps
• Concentrate on a powerful push-off while the front foot lands closer to the body
• Try to swing your arms in time with your stride

ARM MOTION

• Keep your elbows bent at 90 degrees
• Do not clench hands, but keep them in a relaxed curl
• With each step, the arm opposite your forward foot comes straight forward
• As the foot goes back, the opposite arm comes straight back
• The hand should not cross the midpoint of your body
• Speed up your arm swing to increase your speed and your legs will follow

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

• Strike the ground first with your heel
• Roll through the step from heel to toe – being flat footed will slow you down
• Flexible shoes will ensure you are able to roll through the step
• Push off a step with your toes
• Breathe naturally, and as you walk, take deep, rhythmic breaths
• Pretend you are walking along a straight line
• Take some water and some food too if you’re going on a longer walk
• At first, your shin muscles may tire and be sore until they are strengthened

Adapted From:
www.medicinenet.com/walking/page2.htm
www.thewalkingsite.com/howtowalk.html
walking.about.com/cs/beginners/a/howtech.htm