

Some ideas to help fit walking into your daily routine.

- **Walk from your front door** - walk briskly for 5 minutes in any one direction and back again. If you repeat this 3 times a day you will have walked for 30 minutes.
- **Walk with your children to and from school** - when you're on your own walk at a brisk pace.
- **Walk at lunchtime** or meet a friend or work colleague for a walk instead of a coffee.
- **Leave the car at home** especially for short trips and walk instead to the shops, work, bank or friend's house.
- **Get off the bus** one or two stops before your final destination and walk the rest of the way.
- **Take the long way** - when you have the time, extend your walk to work or the shops by taking a longer route to get there.
- **Think about what you do** everyday and find a regular time that you can fit in a walk.

Getting more active by walking has many health benefits.

Walking at a brisk pace for up to 30 minutes a day can help you:

- get fit,
- develop healthier bones and joints,
- relieve stress,
- manage weight,
- sleep better, and
- have more energy.



It can also reduce high blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as reducing your risk of illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

Try to develop a regular walking routine that suits your daily schedule. Once you have a regular routine start setting some targets like walking faster or for a longer distance, entering a 5km event such as a parkrun (www.parkrun.ie) or attending a walking festival.

Get Ireland Walking (GIW) is a national initiative that aims to maximise the number of people participating in walking; for health, wellbeing and fitness throughout Ireland. By logging onto the GIW website (www.getirelandwalking.ie) you can try their 21-day walking challenge to keep yourself on track, or find a walking group near you to make friends and to motivate yourself to do more. There is also a range of factsheets to help you get started, and to keep going.

For more information on walking visit:

www.getirelandactive.ie
www.irishtrails.ie
www.irishheart.ie

Get
Ireland
Walking



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Get Active Go Walking



HE Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Walking is the oldest and most natural form of physical activity. It is suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels.

It can be done anywhere, anytime and it's free. Walking can help you look good, feel great and improve your health.

How much?

For health benefits, you need to be active at a moderate level for at least 30 minutes a day on five days a week. Children and young people need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for 60 minutes a day.

If you do other games, sports or activities for 30 minutes or more in the week, why not walk on the days you don't have any other physical activity planned.

If you have been diagnosed with a chronic condition such as diabetes, heart disease, osteo-arthritis or have symptoms such as chest pain or pressure, dizziness or joint pain – talk to your doctor for advice on how to manage your condition while getting more active.



How fast?

Walk at a brisk pace – you will know you are walking fast enough when your heart is beating faster and you are breathing deeper than normal but you are still able to carry on a conversation.

Once you are a regular walker a brisk pace is about 1 mile in 15-20 minutes or 1km in 10 minutes. This will ensure that your heart is working fast enough to get the health benefits.

If you haven't been active for a while or are very overweight (BMI of 30 or above), start with walks of 10 minutes or less. Gradually increase the length and pace of your walk over time until you reach the adult guidelines.

Getting started

You don't have to do it all at once. You can build up to 30 minutes or more over the day by being active for at least 10 minutes at a time.

Start at a slower pace and build up to a brisk pace. As you come to the end of your walk slow your pace again to allow your heart and breathing return to their normal rates. It is a good idea to include some stretching at the end of your walk.

If you are walking mainly on footpaths, roads or local parks, a pair of comfortable lace-up shoes or trainers with ankle support will be fine. A light, waterproof jacket will also help keep you dry. Wear a high visibility vest or arm bands if you are walking in the early morning, in the evening or the dark. It is also a good idea to carry a mobile phone.

Stay motivated

If you find it difficult to start walking or get into a regular routine, try some of the following to help keep you motivated.

- Walk with a friend – not only is it safer but it may give you an added incentive to keep going.
- Join a group - this will make your walks more enjoyable and it will also motivate you to keep a regular schedule, check www.getirelandwalking.ie for details of groups in your area.
- Keep a diary – use a notebook to keep track of how far or how long you walk each day and week. By recording your weekly progress you will see how easily you increased your activity levels.
- Use a pedometer or step counter – a step counter records just the number of steps you take while a pedometer can also measure distance covered, calories burned and time spent on activity.
- Leave your shoes and walking gear by the door, in the car or set a reminder on your phone.
- Vary your walking route – doing the same route all the time can be boring so change it every now and then if you can, even walking your route the opposite way around can help.

