

**W**ant to lose weight? Walking is one of the cheapest, easiest and most effective ways to slim down as it's low impact and therefore safer on joints than running, plus it's great for fat burning. It also tones your legs and butt while burning up those all-important kilojoules. If you get bored easily, make it entertaining by listening to music or podcasts if outdoors and watching TV if indoors on a treadmill. You can also spice it up with different scenery, a walking partner, a walking group and mixing up the terrain between hiking through the bush, up mountains, on the beach, pavement or treadmill. However, for best results, the first thing you need to do is work out what level of fitness you are – beginner, intermediate or advanced – then follow these intensity guidelines when working out.

## HOW HARD SHOULD IT BE?

**LOW INTENSITY** You should be able to comfortably talk and sing while exercising.

**MODERATE INTENSITY** Your heart rate and breathing noticeably increases. You should be able to talk but not sing.

**HIGH INTENSITY** You should be puffing hard and not able to hold a conversation.

## BEGINNERS

*The aim: start moving*

If you're new to exercise, walking is a fantastic place to start. Include both incidental walking (instead of driving and taking the stairs instead of the lift) and planned walking at different intensity levels for varying durations. Try this beginners program for a few weeks and when you're walking for the maximum duration – at the maximum intensity suggested – it's then time to progress to the intermediate plan.

DAY	PROGRAM	INTENSITY	DURATION
MON	planned walk	low-moderate	30-40 mins
TUES	incidental walking	low	all day
WED	planned walk	low-moderate	30-40 mins
THURS	incidental walking	low	all day
FRI	short walk	moderate	15-30 mins
SAT	long walk	low	40-60 mins
SUN	incidental walking	low	all day

## INTERMEDIATE *The aim: improve your fitness*

If you're already walking regularly, now's the time to introduce a few more elements – including interval walking, where you walk 1 min at high intensity after 4 mins at moderate intensity, continually. Also, because regular walking predominately works your lower body muscles, it's important to include upper body and core exercises too. Try bicep curls, tricep dips, chest and shoulder presses, along with Pilates, yoga or the plank for your core.

DAY	PROGRAM	INTENSITY	DURATION
MON	interval walk	moderate (4 mins) – high (1 min)	30-40 mins
TUES	Pilates/ yoga class	moderate	45-60 mins
WED	interval walk	moderate (4 mins) – high (1 min)	30-40 mins
THURS	upper body workout	moderate	45-60 mins
FRI	short walk	high	20-30 mins
SAT	long walk	moderate	45-60 mins
SUN	incidental walking	low	all day

## ADVANCED *The aim: challenge & variety*

If you're already fit and a good walker, throw a few challenges into the mix. Try increasing the difficulty of interval walking to 2 mins at moderate intensity and 1 min at high intensity, so that you have less recovery time. You could also try weekly challenge walks on the beach, in the water, hiking on hills or on a steep treadmill gradient. Don't forget to include core and upper body exercise throughout the week and be sure to include stretching sessions, especially for your legs, after each walk.

DAY	PROGRAM	INTENSITY	DURATION
MON	interval walk	moderate (2 mins) – high (1 min)	30-45 mins
TUES	Pilates/ yoga class	moderate	45-60 mins
WED	interval walk	moderate (2 mins) – high (1 min)	30-45 mins
THURS	upper body workout	moderate	45-60 mins
FRI	interval walk	moderate (2 mins) – high (1 min)	30-45 mins
SAT	long walk	moderate	60 mins
SUN	challenge walk	moderate-high	30-60 mins

## WALKING CHECKLIST

Before heading out, make sure you have the right tools. You can start with just the basics and then build up from there. Here are a few great ideas for your everyday walking tool kit:

- Decent walking shoes
- Well fitting socks
- Comfortable clothing
- Wide brim hat or cap
- Sweat-proof sunscreen
- Water bottle
- Lightweight backpack
- Money belt
- iPod / MP3 player



*walk off*  
**THE KILOS**

Start slimming down,  
minus the gym, with  
a step-by-step plan by  
**Martha Lourey-Bird.**