WALKING FACTS:

- Improves efficiency of your heart and lungs
- Burns body fat
- Raises your metabolism & helps control your appetite
- Increases your energy
- Helps relieve stress
- Slows aging
- Reduces levels of cholesterol & lowers blood pressure
- Helps control and prevent diabetes
- Reduces risk of some forms of cancer including colorectal, prostrate, and breast
- 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
- Improves flexibility
- Improves posture
- Improves mental alertness and memory
- Elevates mood
- Improves your self-esteem
- Helps control addictions to nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, and other drugs

WALKING WORKS!

A brisk-paced walk can help you and your family look and feel better, increase energy, and pick up your spirits.
According to Blue Cross Blue Shield, more than 60 percent of all adults in the United States do not engage in the recommended amount of physical activity. This lack of regular physical exercise can lead to illness and chronic diseases down the road. Regular, brisk walking is one of the simplest and safest forms of physical exercise. A regular walking program can help control weight, condition the heart and lungs, strengthen bones, and help you take the first step to a healthier future. **Walking is a great way to reduce stress and promote an overall sense of wellbeing.** Not only can it help control weight, tone muscles, decrease the risk of a heart attack, and prevent other serious diseases, walking on a regular basis can also decrease feelings of depression and anxiety.

**Walking Benefits**

**Walking Tips:**
- Maintain an upright, but comfortable posture with your neck, upper back and shoulders relaxed.
- Minimize the sway in your lower back, maintain a slight natural arch in your back.
- Gently pull in your abdominal muscles. This helps strengthen your abs while reducing lower back pain.
- Bend your arms to about 90 degrees. That turns them into shorter, more compact pendulums. You’ll be able to swing them faster and thus help your legs and feet move faster.

**For Beginners:**
Begin by walking 10-15 minutes on flat ground or on a treadmill at a purposeful pace or complete 2,000 steps. Aim to walk at least five days a week. Every second or third week, add 5 minutes. After about two or three months of regular walking, you should be up to 30 minutes. Once you’ve hit half an hour, add variety to your terrain rather than increasing time or speed.

**For More Advanced Walkers:**
If you’re already walking at least 30 minutes a day, concentrate on increasing distance and speed, gradually work up to 45 minutes. Pick up the pace until your walking a mile in 15-18 minutes. To speed up, take faster steps, not longer strides. There is a physical limit to stride length, but as your fitness improves you can always take quicker steps.

**Walking Clubs:**
- Henry Doorly Zoo Walking Club
  www.omahazoo.com/education/clubs/
- The Omaha Walking Club
  www.omahawalkingclub.org/
- The Omaha Hiking Club
  http://members.cox.net/omahahikingclub/index.htm
- The Nebraska Wander FreudeTrailblazers
  www.nebraskawander.org/

**Walking Tours:**
- 1st National Bank Downtown Walking Tour
  http://tinyurl.com/446bdme
- Downtown Omaha Historic Walking Tour
  www.Historicomaha.com
- Forest Lawn Walking Tour
  www.forestlawnomaha.com/historytour.htm
- South 24th Street Historic Walking Tour
  http://south24thomahatour.com/home.html
- UNO Campus Walking/Running Routes
  www.unomaha.edu/wwwocr/health/walkingmaps.php
- Walking Trails throughout Omaha
  www.omahatrails.com/

**Simple Walking Routines**

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- Downtown Omaha Historic Walking Tour
  www.Historicomaha.com
- Forest Lawn Walking Tour
  www.forestlawnomaha.com/historytour.htm
- South 24th Street Historic Walking Tour
  http://south24thomahatour.com/home.html
- UNO Campus Walking/Running Routes
  www.unomaha.edu/wwwocr/health/walkingmaps.php
- Walking Trails throughout Omaha
  www.omahatrails.com/