

WEIGHING IN MARCH 2011

Walk Your Way to Health

Walking is Man's Best Medicine--Hippocrates

It is estimated that 40% of adults spend most of the day sitting at work, at home, and in their leisure time. We have so many things that can make the day easier for us so we don't have to move. Most of our jobs don't require much exertion. Walking used to be how we moved from place to place but not much any more. We even have moving sidewalks so we have to walk with less effort when we choose to walk. However, walking is a gentle, low-impact exercise that is accessible to just about everyone. It is safe and simple and does not require practice. It is versatile--it can be done in many different places indoors or outdoors. There are also many health benefits that come with walking.

Walking is important for weight loss. Weight loss brings many benefits, including lower blood pressure, less risk for and better control of diabetes, increased heart health, increased bone density and less risk of falls at an older age. Walking has been shown to improve brain function by slowing down brain cell loss as people age. Mood also improves with walking and so does the ability to perform other physical tasks.

So why should you walk? Weight loss improves with walking and walking at a 4 miles per hour pace for at least 30 minutes (2 miles distance) has been shown to target abdominal fat for more rapid loss. The goal would be to do this 6 times per week. If you are currently sedentary, walking even 1 day per week helps weight loss. You should also slowly increase this to get to a goal of 6 days per week. Losing weight helps improve many other health issues including those found above. More fat loss means you are composed of more muscle and are healthier and more physically fit.

Walking on a regular basis can lower blood pressure. The first few weeks you exercise, your blood pressure may increase slightly but this is not dangerous. After several weeks, especially with weight loss, your blood pressure is lower during the same activity and at rest. Lowering blood pressure and sustaining this lower blood pressure decreases your risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney problems. Walking also lowers LDL "lousy or bad" cholesterol and increases HDL "helpful or good" cholesterol. Both of these benefit heart health as well. Walking helps your heart.

The risk of developing diabetes is lowered with a good regimen of walking as it helps in weight loss, improved sensitivity to insulin, and lowering blood sugars. Thus, it is helpful in controlling diabetes as well. Because your body is utilizing sugar more quickly, it is also more likely to use fat for fuel improving your weight loss. This helps sugar control in diabetes and helps prevent sugars from rising to levels associated with pre-diabetes also. Continued p2

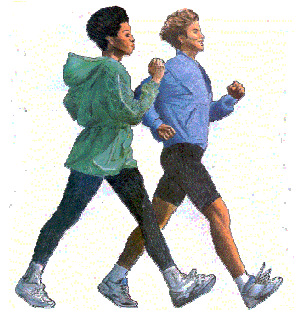
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The fat loss and activity that occurs with walking also improves the function of insulin, making it more powerful, and thus will keep sugars down to help prevent diabetes and its complications. Your energy level will also improve. If you can't wait to get started, there are many benefits as well!

Mood improves with walking. Many reasons contribute to a better mood including increased endorphins--brain chemicals that help control discomfort and are involved in improving mood. You will also feel better if you lose weight and walking helps with this. The third reason is involvement with others if you walk with someone. Talking while walking is a good way to improve your mood and gives a good measure of the right pace of walking. If you can talk ok, your walk is ok. Another reason is exposure to light when you walk outside. Your body makes more Vitamin D and you are also exposed to light which has helped improve mood for many people. You also sleep better when you get into a regimen of regular walking. This improves energy level and mood as well. What is stopping you?

Walking can also slow the decline of brain function as we age. Many age groups were assessed in a recent study. Those who walked were compared with those who did not walk and those who had a similar activity level but did yoga instead. This study looked forward in one group--meaning people were tested after a regimen of walking--and also looked backward and tested people at different levels of fitness reported earlier in life. The walkers had better mental function in many ways across all age groups. This may be for reasons found above and may also involve improved brain circulation and overall improved immune function with walking. One thing is for sure, walking protects your brain. It sounds like a smart move to make.

There are several things that can make walking more enjoyable and less likely to cause minor injuries. First, wear comfortable and properly fitting shoes. You don't need to get the most expensive shoes but you do need ones that fit your feet properly. Some folks walk more on the inside of the shoe and some on the outside and the shoes you spend lots of time walking in need to help you balance this properly. Ask for help and spend some time walking in them in the store to make sure they fit properly. Second, use the right technique. You need to warm up and cool down with stretches before and after exercising. You need to stand up straight and keep your head and shoulders aligned to have the best posture and make the walking more effective for health. You should hit the ground with your heels and roll your foot forward and push off forcefully (like you are pushing gum off the front of your shoe). This helps improve posture, improve the calorie burn, and works on leg and gluteus muscles. Third, take water. Hydration is critical and you must continue to drink water during your exercise. Fourth, if you are outside, plan a route and let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back. Safety is paramount. Fifth, consider sunscreen as more than 15 minutes of sun exposure per day can be damaging to skin health. And don't forget your keys to get back in the house if you are walking outside.

Walking is a great way to be more healthy and you'll be glad when that happens. So...anyone for a walk?

- Dr. Dums

What's Your Priority List?

Do you wish there were 27 hours in a day or go to bed thinking “where did the time go?” If you do you are not alone! Daily time crunch challenges that come with life including meeting deadlines at work, balancing our children's schedules with our own or taking care of a loved one can easily persuade you make unhealthy, yet convenient food choices. With this comes unwanted stress and the dreaded weight gain. Finally, as the scales tip you feel like something's got to give!

Welcome to The Weigh Station! On top of your ever expanding to do list we mandate weekly visits and take an old approach to nurturing our bodies, cooking real food. Okay, I am being a little sarcastic here but in all honesty the average person doesn't do much cooking at all anymore and we are out of touch with what real food is. Have you ever checked out a nutrition label and found that the bag of goodies you are eating is filled with additives you can't pronounce? Scary isn't it. Even “health foods” like fiber bars are full of hidden sugars and additives that are marketed to look like super foods. Not so.

The truth is that proper nutrition requires forethought and preparation. While going through the Weigh Station program you are taught to cook and prepare fresh foods including lean proteins, fruits and vegetables. Our patients have had tremendous success doing so and are successful in making this a priority while in the program. Most importantly however, you have to be willing to make nourishing you and your family a priority for the long term (not just until your goal weight is met). Step one is to continue cooking and preparing your own food. Other macronutrients are also important long term too.

One macronutrient is fat! Yes, I said it- FAT. Our society has caused many to become fat-phobic which in turn leads to more obesity since many are reaching for fat free, sugar laden products that leave them feeling unfulfilled and hungry. Fat, including butter is imperative for kids' brain development and it is shunned in our diets due to the fear of heart disease. The truth is that medium chain saturated fats (like butter) are not stored in the body; instead they are used for energy. They also act as activators for other foods allowing improved mineral absorption of all those vegetables you are eating. Lastly, they make food taste great and help keep you full which keep your cravings in check. There are other kinds of fats to consider too, including mono and poly unsaturated fats (omega 3's) found in fish and olive oil and the type of fat you should avoid...Trans fat (which is found in margarine and junk foods like cookies and crackers). Trans fat helps things stay on the shelf longer...think about it, do you really want this stuff in your body if it can keep cookies from spoiling for months? I don't think so!

The other missing food group is whole grains and/or complex carbohydrates like starchy vegetables. Once you reach your goal you will meet with the Dietitian who will recommend how many and what types are right for you. Remember that not all carbs are created equal, that bun from your favorite fast food franchise is not the same as 100% stone ground whole wheat bread for example. Fiber is your friend when it comes to adding back these foods. In addition, the more natural the food the better. If it comes in a box chances are it has hidden sugars and other additives that are unhealthy. Once you reach your goal try sticking to natural starches like beans, winter squashes, sweet potatoes and brown rice to name a few. Again, the Dietitian will be available to guide you in this process once you reach your goal.

Once you graduate from our program avoid getting caught up in your “false” food habits. Remember, your body needs nourishment which it can't get from fast food meals and frozen cuisines. That is why we find that many overweight individuals are suffering from malnutrition and other nutrient deficiencies, they are eating empty calories. Maintain your new routine of grocery shopping, reading labels and preparing your food. Make this your first priority; after all if you can't take care of yourself then you won't be able to take care of other things on your busy to do list. You are worth it, can do it and we are here to help.

Best- Tricia Foley, MS, RD

Exercising for Weight Loss

We all know that exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. We also know that exercise will facilitate greater weight loss. So if these two statements are true, then why aren't you losing the weight when you're hitting the gym several days per week? The answer is energy systems.

Our body's energy systems are very complex, so I am going to simplify them for you. There are three major systems; they are the Phosphocreatine system, the Glycolytic system and the Oxidative system. Here is some information about how they work.

The Phosphocreatine (PCr) system is the first system to activate. This system can produce energy for approximately 3-15 seconds. It does not need oxygen to produce energy. After PCr has run its course we start the Glycolytic system. This system produces energy from about 10 seconds to roughly 30 seconds, may or may not use oxygen and uses glucose (or sugar), mostly from carbohydrates we have eaten, as its energy source.

The third system, the Oxidative system, can use adipose (aka fat) or glucose (sugar) as its energy source and to use adipose it needs lots of oxygen. If your goal is fat reduction then this is the system you want to train! So, how do you do that? Through moderate intensity, low impact, long duration exercise (walking). If your cardiovascular system cannot meet your cellular demand for oxygen then you will not use fat as an energy source. This means if you are working so hard you are out of breath you aren't burning your full potential of fat. If you are lifting heavy weights, your muscles are under strain and can't get the blood supply they need to use fat as an energy source.

Here is the short and simple. Walk...a lot. Aim for at least 30 minutes per day 6 days per week. Studies have shown significantly more fat reduction with 60 minutes per day 6 days per week. Work your way up to this. If you are just starting to exercise and you overdo it, you will be too sore to continue and you will stop.

Tired of walking? Try swimming, an elliptical machine or water aerobics. Cycling is another fun activity that fits the fat burning bill. Most gaming consoles have movement based technologies that make exercise more interesting. Or you could try an exercise CD. The key is your intensity level.

If you have any questions please ask one of the Physicians or Nurses or you can email me at jbaldwin@weighstation.net.

Recipe of the Month

Stage 2 Friendly: Spicy Fajita soup

Ingredients 4 servings

- 2 medium yellow onions, sliced
 - 2 green peppers, cored, seeded, and sliced into strips
 - 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
 - 2 tablespoons chile powder, divided
 - 1 chipotle pepper, chopped
 - 1 quart chicken broth
 - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
 - 1 cup 2% Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 2 scallions, sliced

Can top with 3 ounces of sliced grilled chicken for added protein



Directions

In the sleeve of a slow cooker, add the onions, peppers, garlic, 1 tablespoon chile powder, chipotle, and broth. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Cook on low for 4 to 6 hours. Ladle the soup into ovenproof bowls and top each with 2 tablespoons cheese. Put the bowls on a sheet pan and put under the broiler until the cheese is brown and bubbly, 1 to 2 minutes. Garnish with scallions, top with grilled chicken and serve.

Provides 4 protein portions (3 from chicken and 1 from cheese) 2 servings of cooked veggies

Announcing our new Maintenance Facebook Group!

Are you in Maintenance and feel disconnected???

Do you wonder how others are keeping their weight off or just need some support?

Join our Group for tips, stories and more :)
(just follow the link below)

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_151153334941265&ap=1