

WALK YOUR WAY CHALLENGE

WEEK 2 – Starting a Routine!

How was your first week? You are off to a great start. Keep it up! One way to help you keep it up is to start a routine. Do you have one already? If you do not have a routine, now is a great time to start making one!

What is a Routine?

Routines are very helpful in everyday life. Having a daily routine can help bring structure to the day. The purpose of a routine is to allow you to accomplish a goal. For us, that means to walk five days each week.

For that reason, learning how to begin a good routine is an important part of staying healthy by walking.

Think of routines as being a daily habit, something you do the same way at the same time.

A routine also helps you measure progress. If you know that you will walk 10 minutes in one direction, turn around and walk back in the opposite direction. Each week as you walk further in the 10 minutes, you can see the progress you are making! But if you are not dedicated to it, you will likely not be able to achieve your goal.

How Habits are Formed

Think of a habit that you currently have (good or bad). Did you know that every habit follows the same three steps?

1. A Reminder — something that prompts the behavior
2. A Routine — the behavior itself or what you do after the reminder
3. A Reward — the value that you get from the behavior

A good reminder does not rely on motivation or memory, rather it is pairing the new habit with an old one. Picking the correct reminder for your new habit is the first step to making change easier. For example, if you usually walk to the mailbox as soon as you get home from work, try walking around the block right when you get home from work.

Don't forget that it is important to celebrate. Because it takes so long for a new habit to stick, small celebrations help make the challenges easier!

One last important reminder: You might have to try a few different reminders before you find one that works for you! That is OK; keep looking!



“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day-in and day-out.” - Robert Collier

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Tips for creating your routine:

Below are some tips to make sure you have a great routine for YOU:

- Your workout needs to fit within your personal schedule. And you may have to adjust for other family members' schedules too. Try writing down your schedule, and do not forget travel times. Once you have everything written down, look for gaps where you may be able to fit in some walking, such as waiting at a sports practice.
- Set reminders. Try setting an alarm if you need to. You could send yourself a text or email reminder to start walking!
- Don't be too hard on yourself. There will be times when even with the best intentions, you just do not get that walk in. That is OK. Just try again the next day.

When is the Best Time to Work Out?

Are you still deciding when the best time of day for you to be active is? You choose!

Morning — One of the biggest benefits to walking in the morning is that all of the day's activities and delays are not in the way. Staying consistent is important, and it is much easier to do that without conflicts from the day. Not to mention, after a long day of work, it can be hard to get out and start walking.

One study found that morning exercise helps curb your appetite directly after working out, compared to afternoon and evening workouts.

Afternoon — Even though there are some benefits to walking in the morning, there are also plenty of good reasons to do it in the afternoon. Research tells us that the body's core temperature is important when we are active. If the body is not warmed up enough, activity can leave you more prone to injury. The good news is, as the day moves along, the body's temperature goes up.

Evening — This is a great time to take the dog out for a walk, walk with the family, or even just to de-stress from the day!

Find out what works for you and your schedule. Walking is walking no matter what time of day!

Don't forget: Eat healthy! Drink lots of water! Have fun!

Sources:

American Heart Association (2016). Common problems and solutions for being physically active

National Institute on Aging (2011). Exercise and Physical Activity

Mayo Clinic (2014). Fitness program: 5 Steps to get started

American Heart Association (2015). When is the best time of day to work out?