

# Walking for Fitness

**MANUAL**



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# **WALKING FOR FITNESS**

by

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## INTRODUCTION

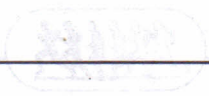
Exercise is crucial to fitness. Keeping fit helps in the prevention of diseases such as diabetes, coronary heart-related diseases and musculo-skeletal problems. Walking is a simple form of exercise that can be easily performed with or without any equipment. Walking is a means of enhancing physical fitness. Fitness is your ability to carry out daily tasks with vigour and alertness, without undue fatigue and with ample energy to enjoy leisure time pursuits and meet unforeseen emergencies. Fitness is the major basis for good health and well-being.

Participation in a regular physical activity like walking will develop the health-related fitness components, which will in turn improve basic energy levels and place a person at a lower risk of common diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. The emphasis at this point is the development and improvement of health-related fitness components through *walking*. These components include:

- ❖ Cardio-respiratory (aerobic) endurance;
- ❖ Body composition;
- ❖ Muscular endurance;
- ❖ Muscular flexibility;
- ❖ Muscular strength.

## Walking

Physical exercises need not be strenuous to achieve health benefits. It has been observed that people who are **inactive** can improve their health and well-being by walking on a regular basis. Walking is part of daily activities and a popular form of exercise. It is seen as one of the safest and most effective form of exercise that can increase health development and maintain physical fitness. For a sedentary person, i.e. one who is normally not



of motion at the joints. The following *tips* will assist in undertaking an effective stretching activity:

- Stretch to the point where you feel a sensation of tightness. Feel the stretched muscle.
- Hold stretch 10-30 seconds.
- Perform each stretch one to three times.
- Do not stretch to the point of experiencing extreme discomfort or pain as this may injure some soft tissues.
- Breathe slowly, rhythmically and comfortably while stretching. Do not hold breath.
- Make stretching a relaxing daily habit.

## SELECTED STRETCHES FOR FITNESS WALKING



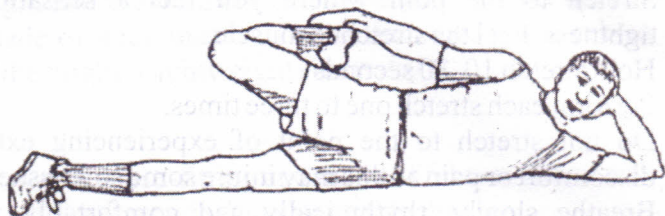
### *Quadriceps and Hip Flexors Muscles*

Be in a standing position.

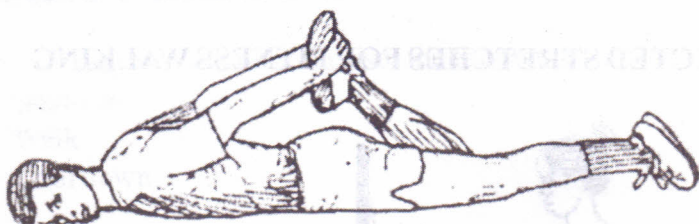
- ◀ Raise one foot towards the hip and hold the ankle. Pull leg upwards to the buttocks.



Lie on your side. Bend the knee and hold the ankle. Press foot into the hand and squeeze the pelvis forward. ▼

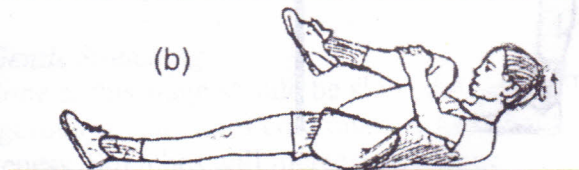


Lie on your chest. Bend knees and hold ankle or foot with two hands. Keep knees on the floor and do not arch the back. ▼



### *Hamstrings and Hip Extensors*

Lie on your back. Hold the knee and pull it towards chest. Then bend head to touch knee.





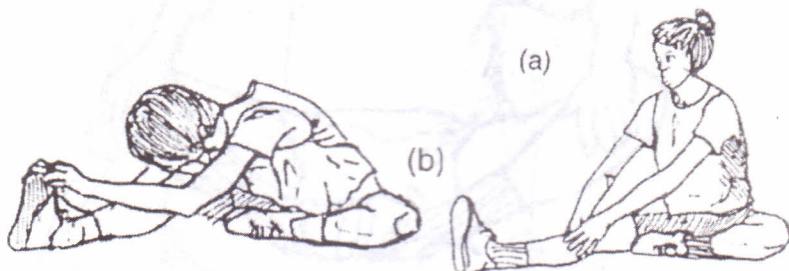
Be in a long-sitting position. Hold ankles and flex trunk to legs.

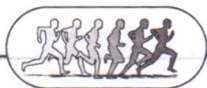


Be in a standing position. Place your foot on a low step. Keep knee slightly bent and bend from the hips until you feel the stretch.

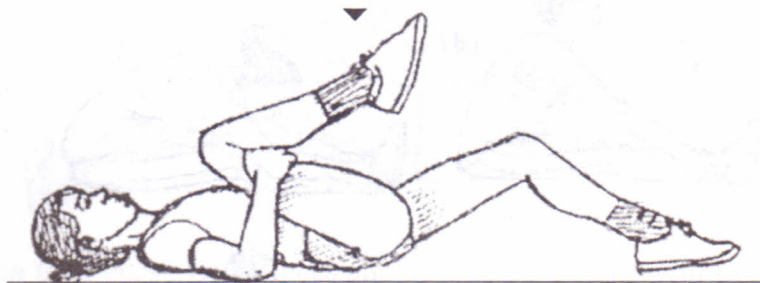


Be in a sitting position with one knee bent. Flex the trunk while keeping the spine extended.





Lie on your back with one leg bent and the other straight. Hold leg with two hands and bend thigh to trunk.



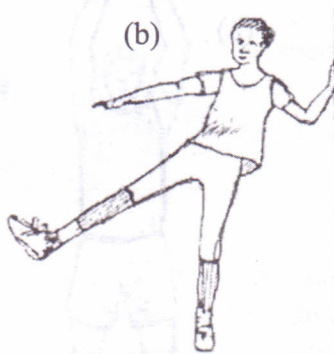
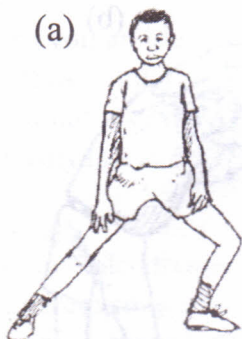
### *Hip Abductors Stretches*

Sit on a flat surface with soles of feet together. Place hands on inside of knees and push downwards slowly.





- (a) Be in an astride position. Bend one knee and hip. Then lower body closer to the floor.
- (b) Stand on one leg. Support self against a wall. Move hip away while you keep the other leg straight.



### *Plantar Flexor*

- (a) Be in front-leaning position against the wall with one foot ahead of the other. Bend hip, knee and ankle to lower the body closer to the ground flat-footed
- (b) Stand with balls of feet on stairs. Lower heels to floor.

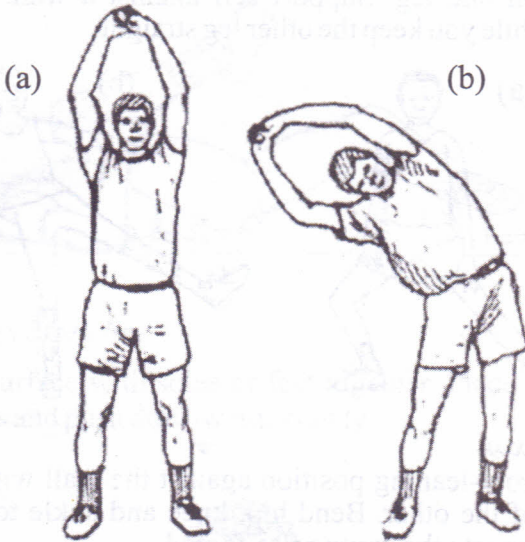






### ***Hip Abductors and Trunk Lateral Flexors***

Take a standing posture with the two arms overhead. Clasp hands together and bend the trunk to the side.



### ***Trunk Extensor***

Sit with legs crossed and arms relaxed. Tuck chin and curl forward attempting to touch forehead





## **2. The Actual Walk**

This is walking at a target heart rate for the prescribed amount of time, which is faster than warm-up. This also depends on the goal of working out.

### *a. Duration*

This gives you an idea of how much time should be spent each day for fitness walking exercise. It has been suggested that each session should take between 30 - 60 minutes. Beginners should keep intensity low and the duration short

### *b. Frequency*

The recommended frequency for walking is three to five days per week. The frequency of walking also depends on the individual's fitness level. Fitness walking must be performed regularly on selected days of the week.

### *c. Mode*

Mode has to do with the type of walk and how you want to execute it. In each session, you may vary the type of fitness walking, i.e. hill, treadmill, stair, water and flat surface walking as mentioned earlier.

## **3. Cool-down**

Cooling down activities come immediately after a vigorous walk has just been completed. It may take five to ten minutes to cool down. However, the more vigorous the walking, the longer it takes to cool down. To cool down, walk slowly by reducing your speed. This causes gradual reduction in oxygen demand at the tissue level and will allow the heart to return slowly to its resting state.



## CONCLUSION

Do not contemplate. Make a decision to adopt an active lifestyle. Opportunity exists for you to consult with experts and to exercise in Human Kinetics and Health Education gym and University Lagos Sports Centre. Come now and lets exercise for health and life. Stay active, stay healthy and productive.



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