

Tone Up for Summer

It's time to play, have fun, and get in shape no matter what your age or present fitness level. You don't have to be an athlete to participate in physical fitness and sports activities. **Here are some easy ways to tone up for summer:**

- ◆ Walk. It's the easiest and most natural form of exercise in the world. Put a daily walk on your schedule, and you'll find you can make time to do it.
- ◆ Work in the yard. You should do that anyway, but researchers say yard work and gardening are among the best forms of exercise.
- ◆ Target activities you love. Dance, hike in the woods, or play outside with your children. Instead of doing the same thing, schedule a different activity for each day.
- ◆ Ride your bike. If you haven't ridden for a while, take shorter rides at first. Riding a bike to work on a nice day makes you feel good and saves money on car expenses.
- ◆ Swim. It exercises all your muscles. Take advantage of good weather and go to the lake or a swimming pool. Also consider taking a water aerobics class.
- ◆ Lift weights. When it rains, make that the day you stay inside and lift, either at home or in the gym.



Recognizing Asthma

When someone has asthma, the inside walls of their airways are inflamed or swollen. The inflammation makes them very sensitive, and they tend to react strongly to things that they're allergic to or find irritating. Some of the more common things that bring on asthma symptoms include exercise, allergens, irritants, and viral infections. When the airways react, they get narrower and less air flows through to the lungs. This causes symptoms like wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, and trouble breathing, especially at night and in the early morning.

Here are several tips to consider:

- Learn about your asthma and how to control it.
- Use medicines as directed by your doctor to prevent or stop attacks.
- Avoid things that make your asthma worse as much as possible.
- Get regular checkups from your doctor.
- Follow your asthma self-management plan.

Source: National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/Asthma/Asthma_WhatIs.html

Get In Step

What simple daily activity can do wonders for your overall health? If you said walking, you're right. Walking regularly can reduce your risk of serious and chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, colon cancer (and possibly breast cancer), high blood pressure, and diabetes. All you need is just 30 minutes a day.



No Need to Run

Of all the exercises you can do, walking is among the best for overall well-being and is comparable to more vigorous activities in its ability to improve your health. And it's easier on your joints than jogging.

Along with the health benefits mentioned above, walking can help you lose weight, fight depression, boost energy, increase stamina, and think more clearly. Some researchers and doctors believe that walking can even reverse both illness and aging.

Having sleep problems? One study found that people who walked more than six blocks a day reduced their sleep problems by one-third. Stepping it up to a brisk pace cut their sleep problems in half.

Walking for Success

To get the most out of walking, follow these helpful tips:

- ▲ Warm up. Walk at a slow pace for several minutes as a warm-up. You'll know you're ready to increase the pace when you feel a little warmer and your heart beats a little faster.
- ▲ Walk throughout the day. If you can't walk 30 minutes continuously, break it up into three 10-minute sessions. Take a short walk in the morning, another at lunch, and one more after dinner.
- ▲ Start gradually. If you haven't exercised in a while or are severely overweight, walk five minutes a day and increase by one or two minutes every few days.
- ▲ Join a walking group. Walking with others can give you the motivation to keep going. (For a list of walking clubs in your area, visit American Volkssport Association at <http://www.ava.org/avaclub/avaclub.htm>.)
- ▲ Stretch out. When you're done walking, stretch for two or three minutes. Stretching improves and maintains the range of motion in your joints.

If you have a health condition, talk to your doctor before starting a walking program.

To learn more about the health benefits of walking, visit the RealAge Workout Center at <http://www.realage.com/WorkOutCenter/intro.aspx>.

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