



Interval Walking For Better Fitness

There has been an increase in the popularity of High Intensity Interval Training recently which involves the performance of short intervals of intense exercise. This has been shown to have great benefits to the health and fitness level of people that are partaking in this type of training, however, it really isn't a fit for everyone.

There are many people that are unable to handle the weight lifting or even a variety of body-weight training exercises that are generally used in High Intensity Interval Training, but the majority of people can handle walking for fitness. A team of scientists from Japan have done a multi-year study of people that were instructed to perform an interval walking program 4 days per week for 30 minutes per day.

(<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25539937>)

The walking program was broken into 5 sets of walking briskly for 3 minutes (at an effort level of 6-7 on a scale of 1-10) followed by walking at a slower pace for 3 minutes. The results of the study were pretty impressive, showing improved health and overall fitness levels in the majority of the participants. This walking program uses intervals which can be a more effective way to train (and burn calories) than exercising at just one lower intensity level.

If you're new to walking or exercise, start with a beginner program. As you progress, slowly increase your time and intensity level and eventually move to more intermediate and advanced walking workouts.

Getting Started: Use the FIT (Frequency, Intensity and Time) Principles for a safe and effective workout!

- **Frequency:** Try the walking workout listed two to four times per week, depending on your fitness level. Beginners should do fewer days, while intermediate to advanced walkers can safely do more.
- **Intensity:** Walk at a brisk—not leisurely—pace, followed by a slower pace. Don't worry about what your pace really is, but do pay attention to your overall intensity, aiming for 5-7 on a scale of 1-10. You'll find a full explanation of the 1-10 Intensity Scale below.
- **Time:** Try to build up to 30 minutes of continual walking. If you don't have a schedule that will allow a 30 minute bout of exercise every day, maybe you could break it up into three 10 minute sessions, or two 15 minute sessions.

The great thing about walking is that you need minimal equipment and you can do it almost anywhere. You can use a treadmill at home or at a gym, head to a mall or get outside. Remember, to do a quick warm up and cool down too. Warming up at a slow pace will help prepare your joints, muscles and heart for exercise. Cooling down will prepare your body to return to a resting state, help prevent muscle soreness, and prevent illness and injury.

RPE Scale	Description
0-1	No exertion. Inactive
2-3	Light exertion. Used for warm ups, cool downs, and stretching
4-5	Medium exertion. Breathing and heart rate a little faster, feeling warmer
6-7	Moderate exertion. Breathing hard, sweating, harder to talk
8-9	Hard exertion. Breathing very hard, can only say a few words
10	Hardest exertion. Cannot keep up the pace for long, cannot speak. Your limit!