

SELECTING WALKING SHOES

People are always asking for shoe recommendations. I don't like to make specific shoe recommendations because everyone's foot is different and people have different walking styles. But there are a few basics for selecting walking shoes:

- 1) Look for a low, supportive heel that rounds (or bevels) in. A thick heel or one that flairs out will cause your foot to slap down rather than roll. This slows down forward momentum and increases the occurrence of sore shins.
- 2) A walker's foot hits heel first and then rolls gradually from heel-to-toe. So, you will need a flexible sole and more bend in the toe than a runner. You should be able to twist and bend the toe area.
- 3) Next, look for a shoe that is light weight and breathable. The last thing you want is the clunky heavy leather walking shoe.
- 4) The most important thing of course is a shoe that fits properly. Be sure your foot has enough room in the toe box. There should be a thumb's width (or about a half inch) between your toes and the end of the shoe. The shoe should be wide enough in the toe that your toes can move freely. Your heel should not slip, and the shoe should not pinch or bind, especially across the arch or ball of your foot.
- 5) Go shoe shopping at the end of the day or after your walk when your feet may be slightly swollen. Also be sure to wear the same socks you will be wearing during your walks. This can make a huge difference in how the shoe fits. Try on both shoes. Your feet may not be the same size (really!).
- 6) Do not shop when you are in a hurry. Be sure to walk around the store for a few minutes on a hard surface. If the store has an objection to this, find another store. It is worth the effort to find the right shoe for you and it is worth spending a few extra dollars.
- 7) Wear your shoes in the house for a few days to try them out. Don't venture outdoors until you are sure the shoes are going to work for you. (If the shoes are not going to work out you will want to exchange them before scuffing them up outside.)
- 8) Keep track of how many miles you have put on your shoes, and replace them every 300 to 600 miles. (If you are wearing very light weight shoes, are overweight, or you are hard on your shoes stay toward the low end on mileage.) To extend the life of your shoes be sure to only wear them only for your walks. Also rotating two pair of shoes will give them time to "bounce back" between walks.

Keep these items in mind when purchasing your next walking shoes. Your feet and legs will thank you for it.

[Lacing for a better fit](#) - New Balance provides tips on lacing methods for various fit problems.

12 WEEK BEGINNER SCHEDULE

Having a hard time getting started ... here is an easy to follow beginner schedule that starts with 15 minute walks and will have you walking 60 minutes in 12 weeks. Warm up and cool down time are included in the scheduled minutes. Be sure to [stretch](#) after your walks.

WEEK	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	15 min	15 min	20 min	15 min	20 min	15 min	20 min
2	15 min	20 min	20 min	15 min	20 min	15 min	25 min
3	15 min	25 min	20 min	15 min	25 min	20 min	25 min
4	20 min	30 min	20 min	20 min	25 min	20 min	30 min
5	20 min	30 min	30 min	20 min	30 min	20 min	35 min
6	25 min	30 min	30 min	25 min	30 min	25 min	40 min
7	25 min	30 min	40 min	30 min	30 min	30 min	40 min
8	25 min	30 min	40 min	30 min	40 min	30 min	50 min
9	30 min	40 min	40 min	30 min	40 min	40 min	50 min
10	30 min	40 min	50 min	30 min	50 min	40 min	50 min
11	40 min	40 min	50 min	40 min	50 min	40 min	50 min
12	40 min	40 min	60 min	40 min	60 min	40 min	60 min

Consistency is key in creating a new habit, so be sure that you get something in at least 5 days a week. The starting day for this schedule may be changed to suit your needs. Just try to keep your easy and harder days in the same order. If you are particularly tired one week, don't increase your time... just stick with the last weeks schedule.

It's ok to take a day off once a week or choose a day to [crosstrain](#). Choose one of the lighter days (Sunday or Wednesday) for this. A workable schedule for me is Sunday off, and crosstraining on Wednesday. As a beginner you may want to get the walking habit down before you add crosstraining to your routine.

It is natural to feel a little tired or have a few muscle aches when beginning a fitness program. Do not let this keep you from walking. On the other hand if you are in pain it may be prudent to take a day of rest. If the pain continues see a physician.

Notice: If you have any health concerns you should get your physician's approval prior to beginning a fitness program.