

# Walking Program

People being treated for cancer often experience fatigue, weakness and anxiety. Prolonged bedrest or sitting can lead to an increase in these symptoms.

***A walking program is a good way to decrease cancer-related fatigue.***

## What are the benefits of a walking program?

- Less fatigue, more energy
- Increased endurance for activities at home and in the community
- Stronger muscles
- Improved flexibility of stiff joints
- Improved appetite
- More positive outlook, less anxious

## How long should you walk?

**The key is to start slowly and build up gradually.** This is especially good advice if you have not been walking for exercise on a regular basis or if you have been very ill. Start with five or ten minutes and add two minutes each week until you are up to a half-hour or more each day if tolerated. This may be variable, though, from one person to the next. Keep in mind you should be able to carry on a conversation with someone as you are walking for exercise. If you cannot, you are walking too fast and will need to slow down a little.

## Components of a Walking Program:

1. **Warm Up:** Walk slowly for a few minutes. This will help your heart, lungs, muscles and joints get ready for exercise.
2. **Peak Activity:** Walk a little more quickly now, but do not get too short breath. You should still be able to easily carry on a conversation with someone during this phase of the program. Pace yourself carefully and enjoy!
3. **Cool Down:** Walk slowly again for a few minutes until your breathing returns to normal. Your body needs this time to cool down so you do not become stiff and sore.

## Please Note:

Your physician must clear you before beginning any exercise program. This program is not a substitute for medical care.

# Walking Tips

- Shoes need to be comfortable. Make sure they are shock-absorbent and have a skid-proof sole. Jogging / running shoes are good choices.
- Pumping your arms as you walk will increase the intensity of the walking.
- Walking outside in nice weather can help you restore your mental energy.
- When walking outside the home, be sure to carry identification and include emergency telephone numbers (family members to contact, your physician) and current medications.
- Be sure to pace yourself carefully. Do not walk so far that you will have a difficult time getting home again.
- Walking at an enclosed mall is a good idea because it is climate-controlled. You will be with other people and have a safe place to rest.
- Walking at home on a treadmill is also a good option for exercise. You can make it more enjoyable by listening to your favorite music or watching your favorite TV program at the same time.

**Please Note:**

Your physician must clear you before beginning any exercise program. This program is not a substitute for medical care.