

Want to lose pounds, inches, stress?

Walk it off!

5 do-it-all plans you'll love

We've got your number: When *SELF* surveyed women earlier this year, walking earned the nod for cardio favorite. To make a good thing even better—couldn't you use a few ways to speed up results?—we consulted the pros and created five plans to match your mood and your goals. Try any of these walks three to five days a week and see improvement wherever you most want it: your weight, your measurements, your mood—or all three!

By Margit Feury Photographs by Jorg Badura

1. Burn calories and shed inches all over!

Thanks to evolution, the way we stride is too efficient. Our feet stay in contact with the ground as long as possible, conserving energy, says Peter Weyand, Ph.D., assistant professor of kinesiology at Rice University in Houston. The fix: Reduce foot-to-ground time by walking as if you're on hot sand. You'll use your muscles more, torching calories. This walk works indoors or out. On the treadmill, increase speedy steps by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mph every two weeks.

TOTAL TIME 30 minutes

CALORIES BURNED About 140*

BODY BENEFITS Extra fat does a disappearing act.

THE TURBO TREK

Time	Walk this way	Speed
5 min.	Warm up, stepping at a moderate pace.	3.5 mph
1 min.	Speed up, as if you're trying to catch a bus.	4.7 mph
4 min.	Slow down to a bit faster than your typical pace.	4 mph
2 min.	Pick it up again, as if you were 20 minutes late.	4.7 mph
3 min.	Slow down, but still move slightly faster than normal.	4 mph
3 min.	Think: Move it, move it.	5 mph
2 min.	Slow down, but stride a little faster than normal.	4 mph
4 min.	Really pick it up, as if you're hoping to avoid someone.	5 mph
6 min.	Gradually slow to cool-down pace.	3.5 mph

*Calories are calculated for a 135-pound woman.



Walking outside relieves fatigue and the blues. Even on a cloudy day, there is 10 times as much light outdoors as in, so head for the open air.

2. The express track to less stress

Exercise is just the ticket to relieve tension, says Daniel Landers, Ph.D., regents professor in the department of kinesiology at Arizona State University at Tempe: "It enhances positive mood and self-esteem." And for mild anxiety and depression, it's equally as effective as drugs. If you're feeling overwhelmed, take a moderately paced walk and maximize its mood-lifting benefits by pairing it with yoga, suggests Sarah Robertson, a recreational fitness specialist at Green Mountain at Fox Run in Ludlow, Vermont. These moves focus on the most tension-prone spots. **TOTAL TIME** 35 minutes **CALORIES BURNED** About 150 **BODY BENEFITS** Burns fat, makes you feel happier

tip Get going! A 15-minute walk ups energy and creativity, improves mood and deep-sixes stress.

MAJOR MOOD LIFTER

Warm up for three minutes (3.5 mph on a treadmill). Then start walking at an aerobic pace (4.0 to 4.5 mph on a treadmill). Every five minutes, stop (step off the treadmill) and do one of these yoga moves. Then continue your walk.

STANDING CAMEL To undo all those hours of at-your-desk and behind-the-wheel slumping, lace your palms at the base of your spine and lean back as far as is comfortable without straining. Take 5 to 15 deep breaths.

FORWARD FOLD Stand with knees bent slightly. Hinge forward from your hips, clasping hands and stretching toward your toes. Take 5 to 15 deep breaths.

CHEST EXPANDER Stand with feet comfortably apart. Clasp both hands behind your back and gently lift up as far as you can, keeping shoulders down. Take 5 to 15 deep breaths.

SUPPORTED REACH Stand with legs shoulder-width apart and gently hold a tree or wall with your left hand for support. Breathe in as you lift your right hand overhead in a fist, rising on your toes at the same time. Look up at your right hand. Take 5 to 15 deep breaths. Switch sides; repeat.

TREE Stand on your left leg and press right foot into left inner thigh. Extend arms overhead, palms together. Take 5 to 15 deep breaths. Switch legs; repeat.

Cool down by walking slowly for two minutes (3.0 to 3.5 mph on a treadmill).

Stop and close your eyes. Tune in to your senses one at a time. When you open your eyes, you'll feel more calm and centered.

3. The I'm-too-busy workout

When you're feeling too time-crunched to exercise, don't bail. Walk a mile as quickly as you can. Don't fret about not doing enough. Research shows that exercising too hard can add to stress and irritability, says Marie-Annette Brown, Ph.D., nurse-practitioner at the University of Washington at Seattle. In this short-but-sweet workout, you will (a) fulfill your cardio heart-health requirements and (b) assess your fitness, says Susan Johnson, of The Cooper Institute in Dallas (see "How Fit Are You?" below). Chances are, it will either motivate you to rev up your routine or let you pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

TOTAL TIME About 21 minutes
CALORIES BURNED About 95
BODY BENEFITS Maintenance

ONE-MILE TEST

Walk this way

Warm up Walk casually or march in place for five minutes, about 1/4 mile.

Work out On a track, treadmill or 1-mile loop you've mapped in your neighborhood, time yourself as you walk a mile as fast as possible. You'll walk faster if you're properly aligned: Keep your cheekbones over your collarbones as you move. Bend arms to 90 degrees and rock them forward, not side to side. The faster they move, the faster your feet will.

Cool down Walk at an easy pace for about three minutes so your heart rate slows.

HOW FIT ARE YOU?

YOUR MILE TIME

13:30 min. or less
13:31 to 16:00 min.
16:01 to 18:30 min.
18:31 to 20:00 min.
20:01 min. or more

YOUR FITNESS LEVEL

EXCELLENT
GOOD
AVERAGE
BELOW AVERAGE
LOW

Feel like you can't walk quickly? It's not a matter of leg length but of proper form: Lean forward slightly, bend your arms and lead with your feet, not your head.



tip Find your best fat-burning stride: Stand, feet together. Lean forward until one leg stops your fall (your natural length).

Pump up the volume. Throw in a speedy burst as you walk. Over time, it trains your heart to be better prepared for things like carrying groceries up a flight of stairs or hoisting a heavy box.

4. Get legs like a Rockette

For great-looking legs, you need one thing: variety. "Your glutes and hamstrings are accustomed only to walking forward, so you have to shake things up," says fitness specialist Robertson. "Stride sideways and backward to shape muscles fast." (If time is tight, you can cut the workout in half and still get plenty

of results.) Because you'll be doing some out-of-the-ordinary moves, it's best to try this routine on a track (use stairs for uphill) or treadmill. **TOTAL TIME** 50 minutes **CALORIES BURNED** About 340 **BODY BENEFITS** Tighter, sleeker, curvier legs

DOING THE LEGWORK

Time	Pace	Walk this way	Speed	Incline
5 min.	Warm-up	Speed up gradually.	3.3–3.8 mph	1–2%
4 min.	Fast-forward	Move like you've gotta get to a rest room...now!	4.5 mph	1–2%
1 min.	Recovery	Faster than your normal walking pace	4 mph	1–2%
4 min.	Backward steps	Roll from ball of foot to heel to work quads.	1.0–1.5 mph	0–2%
1 min.	Recovery	Faster than your normal walking pace	4 mph	1–2%
4 min.	Uphill strides	Use butt and calves to pull you up.	3.3–3.8 mph	8–15%
1 min.	Recovery	Faster than your normal walking pace	4 mph	1–2%
4 min.	Side-to-side shuffles	Start with right foot; switch lead foot after 2 minutes.	1 mph	1–2%
1 min.	Recovery	Faster than your normal walking pace	4 mph	1–2%

Repeat: Walk through these workout steps in reverse order.

5. Cuter glutes, please!

Cuter = toned + tighter – excess flab. The secret to a better bottom line is climbing stairs or hills (natural or treadmill). The combo of lifting your body upward (fighting gravity every second) while propelling it forward is what firms and deflats your butt, according to Patti Finke, an exercise physiologist with Team Oregon Running, Walking and Fitness in Portland.

TOTAL TIME 35 minutes

CALORIES BURNED About 200

BODY BENEFITS Toned buttocks and thighs

BETTER-BUTT WORKOUT

Time Walk this way

5 min. **Warm up** at a moderate pace.

5–8 min. **Steady upward climb** for three flights (or a 10 to 15 percent incline on the treadmill). Push off with toes and keep buttocks tucked under. At the top of the third flight, walk down slowly (lower treadmill to flat), allowing quads to absorb the impact. Repeat as many times as you can, gradually increasing flights and repeats until you can climb for 25 minutes.

5 min. **Cool down** at a moderate but steady clip by walking on a flat surface to help loosen any stair-stiffened muscles.

Tried all these walks and ready for more? Go to www.self.com weekdays from November 17 to 28.

tip Push off with the toes of your rear foot with each step you take to give your walk a little extra punch and those butt muscles more toning in the bargain.

A fast walk on the beach can be a better firmar for your tosh than jogging. Pushing through soft sand is resistance work for glutes and thighs.