

Steppin' Out with Confidence **Web Resource**

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Steppin' Out
WITH CONFIDENCE

Walking Manual For Peer Leaders



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Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Caring for Health

Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg
À l'écoute de notre santé



**Manitoba
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mag
manitoba
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gerontology



ALCOA **CVA A**
Active Living Coalition for Older Adults
Coalition d'une vie active pour les aîné(e)s

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1. Introduction

a) Promoting Physical Activity

Recognizing the large personal, societal and economic impact of chronic diseases and injuries from falls among seniors, community partners have developed a multifaceted strategy to improve the health and safety of seniors in Winnipeg. The promotion of physical activity is a key aspect of this strategy. The *Steppin' Out with Confidence* walking program helps make seniors and their caregivers more aware of the benefits of physical activity. The program also seeks to engage seniors in active healthy living.

The *Steppin' Out with Confidence* peer-led walking program provides an opportunity for older adults to participate in physical activity by eliminating or reducing barriers including perceived safety, accessibility and cost. The purpose of the *Steppin' Out with Confidence* peer-led walking program is to support and encourage older adults to embrace an active lifestyle by offering resource support and by encouraging the development of social networks within the community areas. Furthermore, the *Steppin' Out with Confidence* program helps make seniors and their caregivers more aware of the benefits of physical activity.

Structured exercise classes are no longer seen as the sole means to achieve benefits. Walking has immense health benefits and it is the most popular physical activity for all adults over the age of 20 years (Canadian Fitness Lifestyle Research Institute, 1996). Peer-led walking programs help remove barriers to activity and make older adults feel more safe, comfortable and supported and most importantly, help increase activity levels and improve health.

The sustainability and success of the *Steppin' Out* program depends upon continued interest and resource support from a wide array of community agencies, organizations, teams and individuals. The following community framework illustrates the invaluable role of the volunteer peer leaders in promoting physical activity within their community area. The framework also illustrates the important community connections between the leaders and the resource supports available within Winnipeg.



Steppin' Out with Confidence Community Framework



Steppin' Out with Confidence

Roles

Peer Leader:

The role of the Volunteer Peer Leader is to safely lead community driven walking programs using the *Steppin' Out With Confidence* walking program model. Also, their role is to act as an ambassador for *Steppin' Out with Confidence* and to connect with community resources for support in the form of training, resources, and connections to community locations.

Community Resources:

Community Resources will support individuals in the establishment and maintenance of walking programs. Their role includes connecting the leader with other *Steppin' Out* peer leaders and if not done already, with potential *Steppin' Out* community locations. Community resources will also encourage and coordinate ongoing in-service and educational opportunities for *Steppin' Out* peer leaders.

Organizational Resources:

The role of Winnipeg *in motion* is to act as a physical activity promotion resource for community agencies and teams. Winnipeg *in motion* will support communities in developing strategies and programs to help increase older adult activity levels in their community. Winnipeg *in motion* will also provide peer walking leaders, staff and community members with ongoing physical activity education opportunities.

b) Are Older Adult Canadians Active Enough?

The Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults recommends that everyone should try to participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days of the week (Health Canada, 2002). Researchers have also agreed that accumulating 60 minutes of any intensity physical activity daily will help you stay healthy or improve your health. Even 10 minutes of activity at a time will help improve your health if done on a regular basis (Health Canada, 2002).

Despite the benefits of being physically active, only half of Canadian adults age 56 and older accumulate enough activity to meet the minimum guidelines recommended by the Physical Activity Guide (CFLRI, 1998). According to the 1996/97 National Population Health Survey, inactivity levels increase as Canadians get older. Inactivity levels rise from 59% for adults 55 to 64 years of age to 60% for seniors 65 to 74 years of age to 74% for seniors 75 or older (Health Canada, 1999).

c) Benefits of Regular Physical Activity Participation

Research has shown that regular physical activity is integral to maintenance of overall health. Being physically active can help improve self-esteem, balance, posture, and mobility and can help older adults to achieve feelings of wellness and independence. Physical activity is not only beneficial to the body, but for the whole person.

Physical activity is one of the most important things older adults can do to maintain their physical and mental health and quality of life. Choosing activities that improve strength, stamina (endurance), flexibility and balance will help older adults maintain their independence. To stay independent they

need to be able to reach, bend, lift, carry and move around easily. Staying physically active will help them keep moving and stay strong (Health Canada, 2002).

No matter what age, it is never too late to start being more physically active. By increasing activity levels and incorporating moderate physical activity into their daily routine older adults can enjoy many of the following benefits:

- Continued independent living
- Increased energy (stamina) and decreased fatigue
- Fewer aches and pains during activity
- Stronger muscles and bones
- Improved quality of sleep
- Improved blood flow and circulation
- Weight loss/maintenance
- Improved balance and posture
- Decreased risk of falling
- Reduced feelings of stress and depression
- Improved short term memory
- Improved quality of life
- Reduced high blood pressure and "bad" cholesterol
- Increased "good" cholesterol
- Reduced risk of chronic conditions such as:
 - Heart Disease
 - Diabetes (Type II)
 - Osteoporosis
 - Some cancers

(Singh, 2002)

d) Will Walking Improve My Health?

For older adults or for those that have been inactive or sedentary for any significant time period, walking may be the best form of physical activity for improving health (Jitramontree, 2001). Walking is a great way to be physically active for fun and for health benefits. Walking does not have to be hard to improve health. Many Canadians are choosing walking as their top/favorite activity. In fact, 85% of Canadian older adults rank walking as their number one activity (CFLRI, 1996).

Walking provides an enjoyable time for sharing and socializing with friends or family. Walking is also effective in maintaining healthy weight and is an important form of weight-bearing exercise. Furthermore, walking is a natural movement that is practically injury free (Province of Ontario, 2005). As a peer walking group leader you will be helping to improve the fitness, health and mental well being of seniors.

2. Organizing a Walking Group

Most people begin exercising for health and fitness reasons. However, the majority of individuals who embrace an active lifestyle do so because they enjoy their activity choices and spending time with new and old friends. Walking groups are a great way to get involved and stay physically active. They form a natural support system, encourage others to be active, and provide opportunities to socialize while walking. Many walking groups plan different fun activities to do throughout the year.

Even for small informal walking groups, it is necessary to do some planning and have some organizational structure.

Steps Towards Success!

Thank you for taking the first step to becoming a *Steppin' Out with Confidence* peer walking leader! In part, the purpose of this manual is to outline the basic knowledge required to safely and effectively lead a walking group in your community area. An outline of the *Steppin' Out* framework is also provided to direct you towards essential resources which will help you begin a fun, successful and sustainable group in your community.

To ensure that you are well connected with your peers and community agencies it is important that you follow the 4 steps outlined below:



1 Attend the *Steppin' Out with Confidence* education session

2 Find walking group participants and arrange to be a senior's organization or agency *Steppin' Out with Confidence* peer walking leader

3 Design appropriate *Steppin' Out with Confidence* walking routes, locations and dates

4 Now you can begin *Steppin' Out with Confidence*!

The Steps:

1. The *Steppin' Out with Confidence* education session is designed to teach you the background information, the basic leadership skills and other basic techniques that will help you to provide quality, safe, affordable and accessible instruction to your peers.
2. By volunteering with a community organization or agency, you will gain the support you need to establish a long-term *Steppin' Out with Confidence* walking program in your community area. Some leaders may need to use their partnering agencies and organizations for support with administrative issues, participant recruitment and the establishment of safe *Steppin' Out* walking routes.
3. If needed, community resources such as the Senior Health Resource Teams, Community Facilitators and Community Resource Coordinators are available to support you in designing suitable *Steppin' Out with Confidence* walking routes or locations, and plan dates. Invite your participants and your community resource teams to help in deciding the best routes. Make sure the routes are in safe and well-lit areas and have access to benches, rest areas and public washrooms. Also try to ensure that your chosen route does not require crossing any major vehicular thoroughfares.

You can walk out the route while wearing a pedometer or drive the route using your automobile's odometer to determine the approximate length. Or you can use paper maps or Internet virtual maps (e.g. MapQuest, Yahoo, etc.) to determine the route length.

Remember to keep participants informed of:

- The approximate route length
- The approximate route duration
- Is a shorter route option available?
- Rest stop/ bench locations
- Public washroom locations
- Cancellation/postponement criteria

4. Congratulations, you are now ready to begin *Steppin' Out with Confidence!*

Now that all the pieces are in place, advertise your chosen dates and times to remind participants and encourage others to join. Putting posters up at your block, community centre and in community club newsletters are good ways to reach potential participants. In your advertisements, include the days, times and meeting place plus some information about how long the walk will be. The meeting place should have enough space for an active warm-up. Include a contact name and number. This provides an opportunity for anyone interested to ask questions and/or provide suggestions.

Do not worry if there are only a few walkers. Walk for yourselves, others will gradually join in.

Key decisions:

- Days and times
- Warm up and starting locations
- Walking routes
- Length of routes (longer and shorter options)
- Options for faster and slower walkers
- Advertising
- Weather conditions and cancellations
- Informing participants of cancellations

3. Helping Participants Get Started

The FITTE Principle

There are five essential components to consider when developing an exercise program. Each is described below:

Frequency refers to the number of activity sessions per week. It is suggested that a minimum of 3 walking sessions each week at an appropriate intensity can help improve functional ability. However, four to seven times a week would be optimal.

Intensity considers the level of exertion required for the activity. Current recommendations suggest that all adults should participate in a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity on most days of the week. The **Talk Test** is a simple self-test to monitor moderate intensity activity. The participant should feel warm and slightly out of breath when walking briskly but should still be able to carry on a conversation.

Time refers to the amount of time spent performing the activity. Moderate walking 30 to 60 minutes on most days of the week is suitable for making significant health improvements. Even starting with 10-minute blocks of walking and building to a daily total of 30 minutes will help improve older adult health.

Type refers to the activity performed. The activity selected should be specific to the desired goal. Walking provides benefits related to cardiovascular endurance, lower body strength, improved mobility, improved balance and improved quality of life.

Enjoyment is an important factor in the success of any activity program. To make walking more enjoyable choose a walking location that you all enjoy, have people recruit their friends, bring along a pet or take up bird-watching as a group. Have fun!

Walking Progression

Although participants are voluntarily joining the walking group, you can help them be successful and have fun by encouraging them to:

- a) Be mindful of personal skills and capabilities
- b) Start slow and improve gradually
- c) Set realistic and measurable goals to keep themselves motivated to improve and maintain health

a) Personal Skills and Capabilities

Encourage participants to think about what level of physical activity they feel they are capable of. It is also important for participants to recognize any possible barriers or limitations that they may have to regularly participating in a walking program.

Some important factors for them to consider are:

- What do they perceive to be barriers to walking?
- Do they have any underlying medical conditions, bone or joint problems?
- What is their current fitness level and abilities?

If they have any medical questions or concerns about starting a walking program, direct them to their doctor. A participant's doctor may recommend that he/she have an exercise stress test done if he/she has been inactive for a long time or has a

family history of heart disease. An exercise stress test can be very helpful for those who would like to have more information on their fitness level or how well their body will tolerate an activity program.

b) Starting Slow

Those new to exercise or who have limited ability should start slow and build slow. Starting slow can help prevent injuries and prevent participants from becoming over tired and discouraged. More problems are created when individuals try to do too much too soon. It may be helpful for participants to think of getting started in two steps (start-up and improvement):

Start-up Phase

Participants who are unaccustomed to exercise, should be advised to keep the first few walks short and at a comfortable or light pace. Suggest that the participants start with 5 to 10 minutes and gradually build up their walking time. Keep the start-up phase in mind when designing your walking route. To accommodate the new walkers it would be a good idea to set your route so the group passes by your starting point every ten minutes. Encourage the participants to listen to their bodies and not to feel pressured to walk for a longer period of time. Encourage them to stop and rest when they get tired.

Encourage participants to take at least one day off a week to rest. Sometimes the body can experience accumulated fatigue, which means that their bodies become more tired with every walk. Time is needed to allow the body to become accustomed to walking. Therefore, "start slow and build slow".

Once a participant has completed 3 or 4 walks and they still feel good, they can consider walking for a longer period. As your participants become accustomed to walking for longer periods, you may then adjust the walking route so your group

passes by the starting point every 15 minutes or so. You may also want to set up two separate walking routes on different days for those that walk a shorter distance and for those that want to challenge themselves with longer walks.

Improvement Phase

Although any form of walking will have health benefits, a longer more vigorous walk will yield the greatest gains. Brisk or moderate walking for a minimum 30 minutes on most days of the week is where significant health benefits will be realized. This can take the form of a few shorter brisk (10 minute) walks that add up to 30 minutes/day, or a single bout of 30 minutes. Participants should slowly (over a period of weeks/months) increase the length of the walks up to a maximum of 60 minutes of brisk (moderate intensity) walking per session. To build up to 60 minutes participants can consider increasing their walking time in 5-minute increments to a maximum of 60 minutes per session.

Once the walkers have established a comfortable routine and know what to expect, and are already walking within the ideal time range (30 – 60 minutes), they may also try to walk a greater distance in that same time period. However, faster more intense walks and longer walks are harder on the body. Participants should make sure that they are able to get adequate rest after long vigorous walks to ensure that their bodies can recover.

c) Motivation: Setting Realistic and Measurable Goals

There will be many different reasons for participants to join a walking group. Their reasons may vary from participating in a fun social walk, walking for health improvement, or for a new challenge to walk faster and further. Encourage your participants to think about their reasons for joining the walking group.

Also encourage the participants to think of some short and long-term objectives. The goals should be clear, specific and attainable, and must fit into the participants' daily lives.

Short-term goals are generally related to walking frequency, duration or distance. For example, "I'd like to walk for 20 minutes all at one time" or "I'd like to walk to the store 4 days this week." Long-term goals can focus on the outcomes the individual hopes to gain by participating in regular walking. This might be walking with their grandchildren, maintaining their independence or to be able to travel. By setting attainable goals, participants will find that each milestone achievement will help them stay motivated to keep active and continue to participate in the group walking sessions.

Having participants think about the following questions may help them in setting their goals.

Question: *Are they interested in just going for the occasional, casual walk?*

Suggestion: If the reason for joining is recreational in nature, encourage participants to just go out and enjoy a social walk with friends. With regular walking at any pace, the participants will realize more health benefits than they would if sedentary.

Question: *Are they interested in walking to improve their health and fitness?*

Suggestion: If the reason for walking is for health benefits (active living) it is recommended that participants walk on most days of the week, at a comfortable pace for a minimum of 30 minutes. Some may find it easier to do two 15-minute walks or three short 10-minute walks each day. Longer walks can be done at a slower/light intensity, while shorter walks should involve moderate or brisk walking.

Frequency (F)	Most days of the week
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Intensity (I)	Brisk/moderate or Slower/light pace
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Time (T)	Accumulated time of 30 up to 60 minutes. Can be accumulate over the day in 10 minute "pockets" of time
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Type (T)	Walking up and down hallways, outside, or on a treadmill Variations: Mall walking, hiking
-----------------	--

Enjoyment (E)	With music, with a friend Suggestions: Bird watching, golfing, walking club
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Question:	<i>Have they been walking and would they like to challenge themselves by power walking?</i>
Suggestion:	For those walkers ready for a challenge, fitness/power walking might be the next step. Fitness walking is regular walking with more intensity. Walkers usually walk 30-60 minutes non-stop.
Frequency (F)	Walk: 3-4 times per week Rest: 36-48 hours of "active" rest between "Power Walking" workouts. Active rest allows for lower intensity physical activity participation
Intensity (I)	Moderate to hard pace. Participants should be able to talk to one another while walking
Time (T)	Continuous for 30 - 60 minutes
Type (T)	Walking outside, on a track or a treadmill. Variations: Power walking, race walking, water walking, marching
Enjoyment (E)	Orienteering, try a walking fundraiser event

4. Keeping Participants Interested

Variety is the Spice of Life! There are a number of ways to add interest and variety to participants regular walks. Such as:

- Wear pedometers to see how many steps they take every day.
- Join charity walks that are active fundraisers that contribute to a good cause and are fun for participants.
- Trek through a nearby zoo or park.
- Explore walking trails or historical walking tours.
- Go mall walking.
- Escort young children to school.
- Walk a pet. There are programs available at some pet stores and the Humane Society.
- Join a fitness facility that has an indoor walking/running track.
- Join with another walking group and have a potluck lunch after.
- Go hiking or bird watching.
- Take up a sport like golfing or orienteering.

Throughout the year there are special events that promote walking such as Summer Active (May and June) or Senior's and Elders' Month (October). Watch the paper or listen to the news for upcoming special events such as these.

We suggest that the peer leaders encourage their participants to use a journal or calendar to track progress as it is a strong motivational tool and is a great way to keep participants interested and working towards achieving their goals. Pedometers are also very simple and effective tools to help participants stay motivated as it helps participants easily measure and track their daily activity levels.

Included on page 22 is an "Activity Tracking Tool" that can be photocopied and used as a planning tool by the walking peer-leaders or as an activity log for the walking group participants. Using the "Activity Tracking Tool", participants may keep track of many variables including:

- Time (minutes)
- Daily distance in steps (if wearing a pedometer)
- Walking group walking distance
- How intense they felt the walk was (light, moderate, hard)
- Weather conditions

To keep track of all these details the participants may want to use a diary to keep track of their progress. Other participants may choose to keep a more detailed log in an activity journal or by using computer software.

Figure 1:
Tracking Progress with a Pedometer

We know that walking every day is a good way to maintain a healthy active lifestyle. We also know that the body eventually adapts to an activity if repeated at the same intensity over time. Walking for health improvements or weight loss requires that walking levels increase in a progressive way.

A pedometer is a useful and fun tool to use to measure the progress associated with a walking program. A pedometer is a small device worn on the hip that uses body movement to count steps.

Some facts about a pedometer and its use include:

FACTS

- Simply wearing a pedometer every day can be a powerful incentive to take more daily steps.
- Good quality pedometers are fairly inexpensive. Basic good quality models cost between \$15 to \$40.
- Pedometers can be purchased at most sporting goods and department stores, and various specialty stores.
- It takes only about 5 minutes of walking to accumulate 500 steps
- For older adults, walking 5000 steps would result in walking approximately 3 kilometres (0.59 m to 0.65 m per step) (Bassett et al., 1996).

USE

- The pedometer can be attached to your belt, skirt or jogging clothes, and should be lined up above your knee. It should fit snugly to your body.
- The pedometer should be parallel to the ground (not tilted).

5. Anatomy of a Walking Workout

A walking workout consists of three phases:

- a) The Warm-Up
- b) The Workout
- d) The Cool-Down & Stretching

a) Warm-Up

To prevent injury and muscle soreness, it is important to always warm the body up gradually before entering the vigorous portion of a workout. This prepares the body for activity by increasing blood flow to working muscles and making the muscles/joints/tendons warm and flexible.

Every workout should begin with a 5 to 10 minute warm-up using a combination of loose, large, slow, rhythmical movements such as swinging the arms, shoulder circles while walking or by marching on the spot.

As walking primarily involves the legs, add a few light stretches for these key areas:

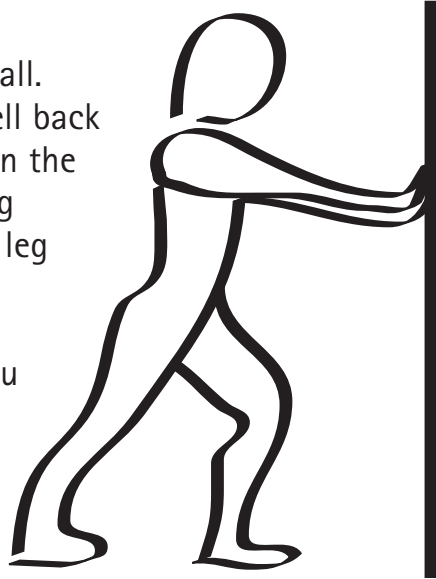
- Front of the thigh (the quadriceps muscles)
- Back of the legs (hamstring muscles)
- Calves
- Ankles

Warm-up Stretches

The following 3 stretches would be considered the bare essentials before going on a walk:

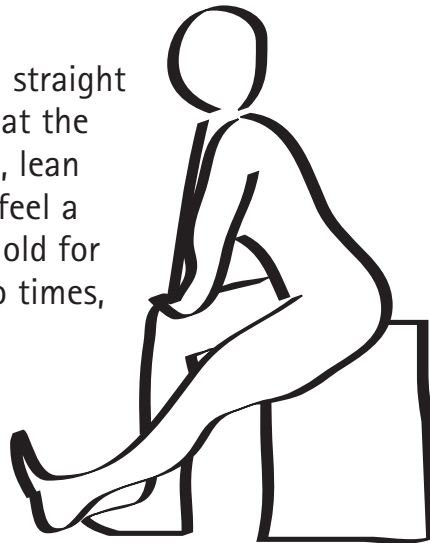
Straight Leg Calf Stretch:

Stand behind a chair or face a wall. In a straddle stance (one foot well back of the other), place your hands on the wall or chair. Bend your front leg slightly, while keeping your back leg straight and both heels on the ground. Lean slightly forward against the wall or chair until you feel a soft pull in the calf and ankle region on the back leg. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and repeat two times, alternating between legs.



Hamstring Stretch:

Sitting in a chair, extend one leg straight out and keep the other leg bent at the knee. Keeping your back straight, lean forward from the hips until you feel a slight stretch behind the knee. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and repeat two times, alternating between legs.



Thigh Muscles Stretch:

Stand close to a wall, chair or base of support. When balanced, lift your heel up and reach down grabbing that ankle using the same side hand. Gently pull that ankle up towards your thigh/hip area. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and repeat two times alternating between legs.



b) The Workout

When starting the walk take 3-5 minutes to gradually increase the walking speed to the workout pace. Maintain a reasonable walking rate for the duration of the workout. Remember the **Talk Test**, participants should be able to talk to one another as they are walking.

When walking, participants may tend to group or pair up as faster or slower walkers. Peer leaders should do their best to ensure that both the faster and slower walkers feel included and should remind participants to walk at a pace comfortable to them. Also, using a route that passes by the starting point several times, provides participants with opportunities to rest when they feel tired or stop altogether if they have reached their daily goal. Peer leaders may choose to walk the route with either group on alternate days or even alternate with each lap.

For those that are walking briskly it is important to gradually slow down the walking pace for approximately the last 5 minutes of the walk to ensure that your participants' breathing and heart rates safely return to pre-workout levels.

Figure 3:

Recall – Activity Progression

As the body becomes more fit, it is able to handle more work. A training program builds in the concept of increasing frequency, time and/or intensity to the next level.

In a walking program the gradual progression could come in the form of walking on more days of the week, walking for a longer time or at a faster pace.

A general rule is to increase distance or total walking time before increasing the walking pace or intensity. Walkers should try to increase their daily walking time by approximately 10 percent (or roughly 5 minutes) each week. Participants who use a pedometer should try to increase their daily step total by 500 steps each week. Once the duration goal has been reached, then the walking pace can be increased.

c) Cool-Down & Stretching

The best time to see improvements in flexibility and range of movement is when the body is really warm. During the cool-down, have participants hold the stretches a little longer (refer to pages 24 & 25) than during the warm-up, because now that your muscles and tendons are warmer, you will realize more flexibility benefits.

Peer leaders may wish to recruit a "partner leader" to help lead cool-down stretches as some participants may stop earlier than others. If that is not possible, the peer leaders may wish to demonstrate the cool-down stretches to the walking participants prior to the walk. As participants finish their walk it is important to remind them of the importance of stretching and recommend that they complete their stretches at the end of their walk when they are warm.

All stretches should be performed slowly and gently. No bouncing! Participants should stop when they feel the stretch or "tension" and focus on relaxing the rest of the body. Entering the stretch slowly allows time to stop before any pain is felt.

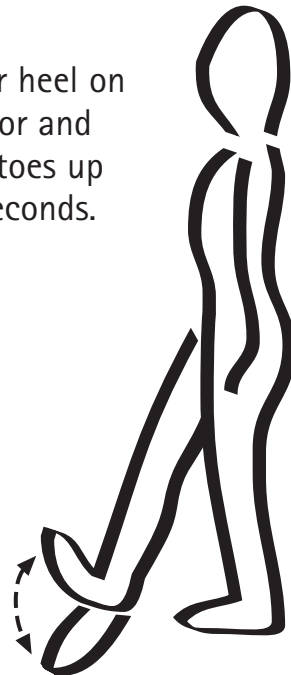
Hold the position for 10 to 30 seconds and repeat twice for each body part/muscle group being stretched. Many find that after a few seconds the tension has eased off and they can move further into the stretch. The stretches should focus on the muscles and joints that were worked during the exercise. Therefore, it is a good idea to stretch the hips, front and back of the legs, inside of the thigh, and the calf muscle.

Cool-Down Stretches

It is recommended that you repeat the warm-up stretches after a walking session but hold each stretch slightly longer. The following stretches are also recommended to improve flexibility after a walking session:

Ankle Stretch:

Standing with one leg extended and your heel on the floor, press your toes towards the floor and hold for 5 - 15 seconds. Then raise your toes up towards your knee and hold for 5 - 15 seconds. Repeat 2 to 3 times per leg.



Hip/Gluteal Stretch:

To start, sit comfortably near the front edge of a bench or chair, with both feet comfortably on the floor. Then, with the aid of your arms, lift the knee at a time up towards your chest and give it a hug. Hold for 10 – 30 seconds and repeat twice per leg.



Figure 3

Things to remember when stretching:

- Stretch to a point of mild discomfort, NOT pain.
- Do not bounce.
- Ease into the stretch slowly, just to the point of tension.
- Relax. Check your shoulders, if they aren't relaxed, then you aren't!
- Don't hold your breath!
- **Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds**
- If the tension from the stretch eases up, move further into the stretch.
- **Repeat 2 to 3 times per side.**

6. Participant Safety

a) Walking Technique and Posture

The basic technique for walking involves a heel-to-toe action, with the heel touching the ground first, foot rolling forward and then pushing off through the ball of the foot and toes.

The stride should be a natural length. Participants should take smooth easy steps. When walking faster, they should shorten their stride length and walk more quickly.

Participants' arms should be slightly bent and swinging comfortably forward and back, not across the body. People will naturally walk with the opposite arm forward to the forward leg.

Their body should be in a natural upright posture with a straight back, shoulders down and neck relaxed. Encourage participants not to lean forward. Their focus should be three or four yards ahead not down at their feet. Encourage participants to breathe normally. Many find it easier to breathe through the mouth rather than the nose.

b) Clothing and Footwear

Clothing

In the summer, participants should wear light porous clothing. Clothing should be loose to prevent overheating and allow for evaporation of excess body moisture. Encourage the walkers to wear a hat, put on sunscreen, and carry water with them.

In the winter, participants should wear at least 3 layers. Layers can be removed if someone gets too hot. The 3 layers help pull body moisture away from the body but also traps pockets of warm air to act as an insulator. Clothes should be loose fitting.

Lightweight synthetic material is usually recommended for the 1st layer (base) closest to the skin so it can pull perspiration/moisture away from the skin. Polypropylene is a good material for the base layer as it is lightweight and non-irritating (i.e. not itchy) for most people.

The 2nd layer (mid-layer) should be a warm insulating layer and its function should be to trap warm air and draw moisture away from your body. Fleece and wool make for an excellent second layer. Cotton should be avoided because when it gets wet it stays wet. Examples of a good second layer include long underwear, sweaters, and fleece jackets.

The 3rd layer (outer layer) should be windproof. There are many types of windproof clothing including hats, pants, jackets and pullovers. The outer layer should be able to trap heat, remain breathable and shield from wind and water.

Encourage participants to:

- Keep their neck warm with a turtleneck, neck warmer or a scarf
- Wear mitts, hat and sunglasses
- Wear a scarf over their mouth on a cold day to keep the air they breathe warm and moist
- On cold days cover exposed skin with petroleum jelly, and use a lip protector (e.g. lip balm) on their lips.

Socks

Socks that are made mostly of synthetic fibers such as acrylic blend seem to be the best for moving moisture away from the feet. This helps to prevent burning feet and blisters. Socks should have some padding and be shaped to fit the natural curves of the foot.

Footwear

For every kilometer walked, each foot hits the ground approximately 650 times (Province of Ontario, 2005). With longer distances that impact can have a damaging effect on older adults joints, shins and feet. To reduce the risk of injury associated with walking, it is important to encourage participants to wear comfortable socks and well designed walking or jogging shoes.

Specialized walking shoes are designed to absorb 1 to 1.5 times their body weight and are designed to support and stabilize your foot throughout its range of motion. Walking shoes should support the heel and promote a linear heel to toe motion. Specialized walking shoes are usually lightweight, flexible in the mid-sole and should have approximately a 1/2 inch heel height to reduce over-stretching of the Achilles tendon.

When shopping for appropriate shoes people should go in the afternoon when their feet are larger. The shoes should be comfortable at first, and before buying it is recommended that the shoes be worn for a short walk around the store. Stores will often allow the shoes to be returned within a specific time period as long as they are not worn outside.

Not everyone walks the same way. By checking the wear pattern on current shoes, individuals can see what areas become stressed when they walk. This can be important information when buying shoes. Going to a specialty store with properly trained staff can be very educational and personally useful. It is a good idea to bring in old shoes when buying new ones so the staff has a better idea of what a person's needs may be.

Old shoes, poor fitting shoes or those with improper support can cause problems for the feet, calves, knees and even the hips. People with medical problems, such as diabetes or arthritis may have specific foot related concerns including

flat feet or very high arches. These individuals should seek out professional advice from their doctor, podiatrist, physiotherapist, chiroprapist or diabetes health educator.

The weight of the person or the mileage put on the shoes will determine their life span. Leg fatigue, calf cramping and/or foot problems can be due to shoes that have broken down inside. When shoes can no longer provide proper support, it is time to replace them.

c) Hydration

Encourage participants to drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. Exercise and certain medications can increase water loss. This can contribute to muscle cramping, as well as a sense of fatigue. Drink before, during and after the walk. Avoid caffeine drinks (e.g. tea, coffee, and colas) as they can increase rather than replenish water loss.

d) Rules of the Road

To increase participant safety and prevent serious injury, encourage all participants to follow all rules of traffic including:

- Walking on the sidewalk or walk paths and avoiding walking on roads that allow traffic.
- Yielding to traffic (safety first) when crossing streets.
- Obeying all traffic signals and signs.
- Always utilizing crosswalks when available.

e) Emergency Situations

Although you will be encouraging participants to modify their walking intensity to their comfort and fitness levels, an injury or emergency situation may occur. Therefore, it is recommended (but not required) that all walking leaders be trained in emergency first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

If walking outside it is recommended that you carry a cell phone with you or know where along the route you can access a phone during your walks. If any participant abruptly stops or leaves the group without an explanation, have an assistant or fellow participant follow them to determine if they need help.

If walking in or near a facility where there are persons trained in first aid or CPR, it is beneficial to identify them as a possible resource ahead of time. It is recommended that you inform these trained professionals of your walking group dates and times as they may be able to assist you in the event of an injury or emergency.

If an injury or emergency does occur:

- Immediately seek further assistance.
- For serious or emergency situations or when in doubt, call 911 immediately and stay at the scene.
- Provide or assist with emergency first aid until professional medical help arrives.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

"Winnipeg winters can be pretty cold and icy. Is it still safe to go for a walk?"

As long as participants are dressed for the weather conditions, cold weather should not prevent them from enjoying a winter walk. However other factors may affect their ability to walk safely.

Ice and snow can offer an uneven and slippery walking surface, and can increase the risk of falling. Clear, sanded sidewalks and boots with good traction can help to improve footing. Also, participants can add a "pick" to their cane to grip the ice, buy cleats for their boots, or use old ski poles to steady themselves.

As a safe alternative, when its slippery or extremely cold you may make arrangements to move your walking groups indoors at the local shopping mall, local school or in the hallways of their apartments.

Note that walkers may find it difficult to maintain their normal pace or distance during the winter months because of the conditions and the extra clothes they are wearing. So, it is recommended that walkers adjust their pace to suit their comfort levels and the weather conditions to ensure their safety.

"Sometimes I get a pain in my side when I am walking. What should I do?"

If participants get an abdominal cramp or pain in their side (commonly known as a stitch), suggest they try slowing down, relaxing, breathing deeply and stretching their arms over their head. This should help to stretch out the cramping muscle.

To ensure their safety, remind participants to adjust their walking pace to suit their comfort levels and the weather conditions.

"My shins and calves get sore when I walk. Are these shin splints?"

Persistent pain in the shin area may indicate a condition known as shin splints. The best treatment for shin splints is rest. Encourage participants to see their doctor if they suspect they have shin splints.

Possible causes for sore calves and shins include:

- Improper warm-up.
- Walkers may be increasing the intensity and/or duration of their workouts too quickly and not giving their body enough time to adapt.
- Their footwear may not fit properly or may be breaking down due to age and excessive use.
- Dehydration.

"I'm just starting a walking program. How far should I walk to start and how quickly should I increase my time and/or distance?"

Starting walking distances vary greatly dependent upon many factors including age, gender, lifestyle and health status. At the start of a program, tell participants to walk only as far as they feel comfortable. It is better to start off with shorter distances and slowly build up their walking distance/duration over several weeks (see page 14 - **Starting Slow** for more details). It is recommended that they not increase their time and distance by more than 10-15% each week. Also, it is recommended that they increase their walking distance and time before they increase their walking pace.

If participants are using a pedometer, it is suggested that they find out their baseline daily step total. This can be done by wearing a pedometer each day for a week, then dividing the weekly total steps by 7 to calculate the average daily step total (e.g. Week Step Total ÷ 7). Each week they should then try to increase their average daily step total by 500 steps.

"I'd like to use walking to help control my weight. How many calories do I burn while walking?"

The amount of energy used when walking can depend upon several factors including weight, walking speed, and the surface type (e.g. snow, sand, gravel, or asphalt). The table below outlines the average caloric use per hour walked at a given speed for people of different weights on level ground. Also listed is the average caloric use for each kilometre walked for the different weights. Remember that one pound of fat is equal to 3500 calories.

Body Wt. Kg.	Body Wt. Lbs.	Average Activity Calories per km.	Total Activity Calories/hr. at 3 km./hr. walking speed	Total Activity Calories/hr. at 4 km./hr. walking speed	Total Activity Calories/hr. at 5 km./hr. walking speed
45.4	100	22	65	86	104
56.7	125	27	81	108	130
68.0	150	32	97	129	156
79.4	175	38	113	151	183
90.7	200	43	129	172	209
102.0	225	48	145	194	235

Table derived from the ACSM walking equation (Frankling et al., 2000)

"How often should I replace my walking shoes?"

Walking shoes should be replaced every 300 to 500 miles (480 to 800 kilometres). Don't go by outer appearance as the inner support can be worn. Walking shoes will last longer if participants save them for their walking sessions and do not use them for everyday casual wear.

"Should I carry hand weights when I walk?"

No. It is not recommended that participants carry hand weights when you walk as the risks far outweigh the benefits. Carrying hand weights may place excessive strain on upper body ligaments and joints. Carrying weights while walking also increases the risk of raising blood pressure.

It is recommended that participants supplement their walking program by using weights as a separate exercise program. This is an excellent way to help tone and strengthen muscles properly. Information and guidance for using hand weights to increase strength and muscle endurance is provided in the *Steppin' Up with Confidence Peer-led Exercise Program*.

"How much water should I drink during a day that I am active?"

Scientists recommend that older adults should drink 0.13 cups of fluid for every kilogram body weight or 0.06 cups for every pound of body weight (Juan and Basiotis, 2004). Water consumption can come in the form of moisture in foods and beverages as well as in the form of plain water. Most fruits and vegetables are comprised of 90% water and meats and cheeses can contain up to 50% (Juan and Basiotis, 2004). The following table gives a break-down of recommended daily fluid intake for various body weights.

Body Weight Kg.	Body Weight Lbs.	Recommended Daily Fluid Intake Cups/Day*
45.4	100	6
56.7	125	7.5
68.0	150	9
79.4	175	10.5
90.7	200	12
102.0	225	13.5

*1 cup = 8 fluid ounces

"Should I work out when I have a cold or when I'm not feeling well?"

When participants feel up to it, sometimes it is okay to go for a light walk when they have a runny nose, sore throat or are sneezing. However, there are times when individuals should skip a walk and rest. These include:

- Feeling excessively tired
- Not well hydrated
- Have a fever
- Have "new" body aches
- Have chest congestion
- Have swollen glands
- Have a recent joint injury

If you have any further questions, please contact one of your local community resources to have your questions or concerns addressed.

Thank you for becoming a *Steppin' Out with Confidence* peer leader! Your commitment will help to improve the fitness, health and mental well being of your peers in your community area. Without your assistance, this program could not possibly be a success.

8. References

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