

Exercise walking is number one. Stride On...

By Judy Heller, Founder and President of Wonders of Walking

Did you know exercise walking has been the most popular fitness activity since 1990? It grew 1.5% in 2006, with 87.5 million Americans walking for exercise. This is very exciting for those of us who are avid walkers and enjoy striding for health, fitness and/or competition.

Our bodies can benefit from all forms of physical activities. If you have not already created the habit, now is the time for you to make time for regular fitness activity by walking. Running is a great aerobic exercise, but few of us have bodies to survive the high impact landings per mile.

Walking benefits you in other ways too; it helps lower the risk of heart attack, diabetes, stroke, osteoporosis, breast and colon cancer. It helps reduce weight, cholesterol levels, constipation, depression, age-related dementia and at the same time increases muscle mass, bone mass, reshapes thighs and flattens bellies.

Eighty-seven and one-half (87.5) million Americans are rediscovering that walking briskly makes them feel good! It relieves tension, elevates self-esteem, builds self-confidence, improves circulation, and can also boost the immune system. Walking, a sport for a lifetime, can unlock the energy, positive attitude and vitality that make each day a pleasure.

For anything to become a habit it must be fun! Design a strategy. Schedule walks with a friend, join a group or club, and/or set a goal to participate in an event such as the Willamette Valley Walk Relay or Portland Marathon. Come discover what the Greek Physician Hippocrates knew: "Walking is Man's Best Medicine." Go on, put on your shoes, and celebrate the wonders of walking!



Walking facts of interest:

- Walking is one of the most effective exercises for weight loss because it can be performed regularly for long periods of time
- Walking is a natural locomotion that, when combined with proper technique, can provide a challenging, motivating, and exhilarating total body workout for everyone
- Walking uses almost all 650 muscles and 203 bones in the body – more than any other sport
- It takes roughly 2,000 steps to walk a mile and most people will walk from 3,000 – 6,000 steps in a day
- Research suggests walking 10,000 steps a day leads to better health

Judy Heller has changed and shaped the way people think about walking for the past 13 years. One of the region's foremost experts on walking, Heller is a well-known fitness and walking coach and a master racewalker who has trained hundreds of people and organized some of the region's most respected recreational and competitive walking events. To learn more about the organization she founded, Wonders of Walking, go to www.wondersofwalking.com

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Thank you

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*Larry and Gail Snethen
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