



# Patient Resources

## Beginner Walking Program

Exercise is great for individuals with arthritis. Often, individuals with arthritis avoid exercise because of their symptoms (e.g. joint pain, stiffness, and fatigue). However, exercise has been proven to reduce joint pain, stiffness and fatigue while increasing strength and flexibility. With regular exercise, individuals notice improvements in their arthritis symptoms.

It is very important that individuals with arthritis challenge themselves, and recognize when an activity is doing more harm than good. Individuals with arthritis of the hips and knees may find that walking is difficult to tolerate, and may find that water-based exercise or bicycling to be more tolerable. Speak with your healthcare provider about any concerns you may have before beginning an exercise program.

Before beginning a walking program, there are a few important considerations:

1. **Start slow.** Don't worry about speed or distance; most beginners will begin by walking down the block for 10 minutes, and then turning around to walk back for another 10 minutes. Do this every day for one week. You can use the chart below as a guide!
  - Too difficult? Start out by walking down the block for 5 minutes and walking back for 5 minutes.
  - Too easy? Add 5 minutes to your walk the following week, for a total walk of 25 minutes. Keep adding 5 minutes until you are walking as long as desired.
2. **Stay hydrated.** It is important to drink plenty of water before, during and after walking.
3. **Warm up & cool down.** Prepare your body for movement with a 1-2 minute slow, warm-up pace. Gradually increase your pace. Towards the last 1-2 minutes of your walk, return to the slower pace to cool your body down. Incorporate stretches into your cool-down to prevent injuries.
4. **Commit.** The most difficult part of starting anything new is developing a habit. Plan to walk daily (a minimum of 5 days/week is a great start!), recruit friends and family to help support you and celebrate your successes.

### Beginner 6-Week Walking Plan

Week	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	off	15 minutes	20 minutes	15 minutes	20 minutes	15 minutes	20 minutes
2	off	20 minutes	20 minutes	15 minutes	20 minutes	15 minutes	25 minutes
3	off	25 minutes	20 minutes	15 minutes	25 minutes	20 minutes	25 minutes
4	off	30 minutes	30 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes	20 minutes	35 minutes
5	off	30 minutes	30 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes	20 minutes	35 minutes
6	Off	30 minutes	30 minutes	25 minutes	30 minutes	25 minutes	40 minutes

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Adapted from The Walking Site.