

# WALK YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

## Lunch and Learn Handout & Resources

### Walking is a Holistic Exercise – Good for the Body, Mind, & Spirit

#### PHYSICAL

- Lowers the risk of heart disease and stroke
- Prevents and controls chronic illness and risk factors
- Increases your lungs' ability to take in oxygen
- Better bone density
- Reduces risk of cancers

#### MENTAL

- Decreases risk and symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Releases happy hormones/endorphins
- Improves productivity and mental cognition
- Improves executive functions such as focus, memory, recall, and problem solving

#### SPIRITUAL

- Replenishment of the soul
- Connection to nature
- Personal problem-solving
- Improved self-esteem
- Activates imagination and creativity

### Your Walk is a 3-Part Strategy

#### THE WARM UP

- Increased movement of blood through the tissues.
- Increased delivery of oxygen and nutrients to muscles/organs.
- Prepares muscles for stretching.
- Prepares the heart for an increase in activity.
- Mental prep for the upcoming exercise.
- Primes your nerve-to-muscle pathways to be ready for exercise.
- Improved coordination and reaction times.

#### Dynamic Stretching

### WARM UP FOR WALKERS

#### LEG LIFTS

Swing one leg out to the side, then swing it back across your body in front of your other leg. For stability hold onto a steady object.

#### BUTT-KICKS

While standing tall, walk forward with an exaggerated backswing so that your heels come up to your glutes.

#### WALKING LUNGES

Step forward using a long stride, keeping the front knee over or just behind your toes. Lower your body by dropping your back knee toward the ground. Maintain an upright posture and keep your abdominal muscles tight.

Repeat all stretches/exercises 10 times on each side.



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### THE WALK

- Establish a walking routine that works for you.
- Decide if you will walk with a partner or on your own.
- Ensure you have proper clothing/footwear for all weather.
- Know your fitness level and check your form.

**Form & Function**

### Learn Proper Form



### Counting Your Steps?

ACTIVITY LEVEL FOR ADULTS	# OF STEPS
Very Active	10,000 – 16,000
Active	10,000
Somewhat active	7,000 – 9,999
Low active	4,000 – 7,000

### MAKE WALKING INTERESTING:

- Walk your neighbourhood streets, choose different routes.
- Walk at various times of the day and experience different sights and sounds.
- Walk with a friend or family member for safety if your only time to exercise is at night.
- Join a walking or hiking group.
- Brainstorm or problem solve through a walking office meeting.
- Drive to different nature reserves, or local parks and enjoy the view.
- Be mindful but observant of all of your senses.
- A dog that needs regular exercise gives you the motivation to walk every day - yours, a friend's, or a dog from a local shelter.
- Walking with other people can turn exercise into an enjoyable social connection.
- Look for the self-guided or guided nature walks that have been set up in many parks.
- Ask neighbours or friends if they would like to join you on your walks.

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### THE COOL DOWN

- Reduces heart and breathing rates.
- Gradually cools body temperature.
- Returns muscles to their optimal length-tension relationships.
- Prevents blood from pooling in lower extremities.
- Returns the body to rest and normalizes body systems.
- Reduces pain and lactic acid buildup.
- Prepares muscles for next exercise session.

### Static Stretching

### COOL DOWN FOR WALKERS

#### QUAD STRETCH

Lying on your side, pull left heel into left glute, feeling the stretch in the front of the thigh. Repeat with the right leg.



#### HAMSTRING STRETCH

Lie on your back with your legs extended. Bend your right knee towards your chest. Slowly straighten your right knee, grabbing the back of your thigh with both hands. Pull your leg towards you gently. Switch legs.



#### GLUTE STRETCH

Lying on your back, cross right leg over bent left knee. Then bring left knee to chest, holding onto the back of your thigh, gently pressing right knee wide. Switch legs.



#### CALF STRETCH

Find a street curb or step. Place the ball of your foot on the end of the ledge. Slowly drop your heel down while keeping the ball of your foot on the step. Support yourself if you can or have someone to grab onto.



Hold the above stretches for 15-30 seconds.

### Lunch and Learn Sources:

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