

# Words of Wellness

May 2011

## WALKING / HIKING

Special thanks to Steve Everett, Dawn DeCoursey, Kathy Szo & Garth Wade of District 18.

**Walking/hiking** is a natural exercise that promotes personal physical fitness. It is economical and convenient. It really does not require any special equipment, unless you become more advanced into the activity. Most of all, there is no physical strain involved, unless the walking/hiking involves hills, rooted paths and mountains. The key to remember when participating is that, "the journey is more important than the destination". The activity can range from an average Sunday walk through your local community, park, etc. or a three day hiking expedition at a Provincial or National Park. When people think about walking/hiking, they mostly think of nature, being outdoors, a chance to forget about your work, daily routines and to get a mild, moderate or advanced workout.

### Why walk/hike?

- It is easy to start and inexpensive. Good footwear, appropriate clothing for the environment and a small backpack is usually all you need.
- It can be a starting point to a whole range of other related activities: rock climbing, camping, orienteering or geo-caching.
- It is a year round activity. This can make it very appealing to some, walking/hiking in the snow, through autumn leaves, the mud of spring and hot summer temperatures.

### Walking for Fitness

- Depending on your time and fitness level, start walking ten minutes to half an hour – as you feel comfortable continue to add more time to your walk/hike.
- Prior to heading out, you may consider some light stretching (upper and lower leg).
- Start by walking/hiking at a comfortable speed of pace. This will increase your aerobic strength and endurance.
- By using a slight bend in your elbows and swinging your arms gently along your sides, the fitness benefit will increase.
- You may want to use a walking stick or walking poles. This increases the fitness benefit and provides increased balance and stability.
- Being able to comfortably maintain conversation is a good measure to ensure that you are not overdoing it.
- Add some variety to your walks by changing your route and by changing your pace during your walk/hike. (Use intervals – start at a nice stroll, walk brisk for 3-5 minutes, slow down to a moderate pace, then increase your speed again).
- Do not forget to cool down by walking at a relaxed pace for 5 minutes or so at the end of you total walk/hike.
- Try to get out three to four times per week.

### Other Ideas:

- Keep a record of your walks/hikes (location, time of year & distances)
- Have a walking buddy.
- Wear a pedometer (keep track of your steps).
- Challenge yourself or others to either walk/hike a set number of times per week, or select a number of specific trails that you would like to conquer.
- Learn more about geo-caching and bring along your GPS on your walk/hike.
- Join a walk/hike club in your area.

### Tips on Selecting

#### Footwear:

- Remember that cost does not always determine quality.
- The shoe should flex easily at the metatarsal arch (just where the toes meet the foot)
- The insole should feel good and the sock liner should be soft, strong and have no seams that could cause irritation while walking or running.
- A firm heel counter and good heel fit are critical factors when selecting a shoe. Check to see that the heel counter is firm and that the heel fits relatively snug.
- Check for double stitching, especially at the toe and heel area.
- Sole selection will determine the type of terrain that it will encounter. Fit and comfort are very difficult to quantify and it is almost entirely subjective. Make sure the big toe does not touch the top of the toe box and see that the heel fit is snug and firm. The final question is always, "Does it feel good?" Attempt to match the shoe to the activity. Wearing a shoe that is durable and most of all comfortable can make your outings pleasurable!



### Kathy's Trail Mix

- ¼ cup Sunflower seeds
  - ¼ cup Pumpkin seeds
  - ¼ cup Oatmeal
  - ¼ cup Carob chips
  - ¼ cup Raisins
- (makes enough for 2 people)

#### Other Options:

- Dried cranberries
- Dried apricots
- Almonds, cashews, peanuts



### Websites:

- <http://walking.about.com>
- [www.walking.org](http://www.walking.org)
- [www.change4life.org](http://www.change4life.org)
- [www.walkingandhiking.co.uk](http://www.walkingandhiking.co.uk)
- [www.frederictontrailscoalition.com](http://www.frederictontrailscoalition.com)
- [www.canadatrails.ca/hiking/hike\\_nb.html](http://www.canadatrails.ca/hiking/hike_nb.html)

### Walking Songs:

- These Boots are Made for Walking
- I'm Walking on Sunshine
- I Would Walk 500 Miles
- The Happy Wanderer
- I Walk the Line

**"Everywhere is within walking distance  
if you have the time"**

— Steven Wright

**"A journey of a thousand miles begins  
with a single step."**

— Chinese Proverb