

Walking Is Best For Arthritis

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Last time I did not have time to cover all I had wanted to tell you about the benefits of walking for arthritis.

Right Shoes

All shoes are not good for the walking exercise we are discussing.

The shoes need to have flexible soles, good arch supports and cushioned insoles to absorb shock.

The shoes have to fit correctly. Wear walking socks when you go to buy the shoes. Go to get the shoes at the end of the day when your feet are larger to get a better fit.

Right Clothing

You would be surprised by the number of people who don't get this right. Wear loose, comfortable clothes that breathe with you. The layer by your skin should help wick moisture away from your skin to keep you cooler. Dress in layers so you can adjust to changing temperatures.

Plan The Route

If you are walking outdoors this is very important.

Check out your proposed route.

Begin with flat terrain.

If you go alone, be sure others know your route.

Take I.D. with you.

Consider taking a cell phone if you go alone.

Use a cane or walker if you are unsteady.

It is ideal to walk with a partner who can give support if you need it.

Pace Yourself

Take time to warm up by strolling for a few minutes before you walk. Some people like to include stretches.

Find the best walking pace that suits you. It may vary from one day to another depending on how you feel. You don't have to walk fast. Begin slowly with a shorter distance.

Safety

Use a cane if you need to.
Choose a firm, flat, level surface.
No uneven ground.
Probably best to avoid grass.
Walk when the light is best for your vision.
If possible wear bright clothing.
Hydrate. Drink water before and after you walk.
Having a regular partner can keep you committed and be a social outlet.

Chart Your Progress

Some of my patients find it helpful and it motivates them to keep a chart of their walks, i.e. the day, time taken, approximate distance.

Once you start and find out how much better you feel you won't want to stop. As I said last week in closing I want you to KEEP MOVING because it is good for arthritis management and has many other body benefits.

All Orthopaedic Surgery problems such as arthritis can be evaluated by Dr. Haverbush at the Lakeview Community Wellness Center in Lakeview or at the office in Alma at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan.

Please call 989-463-6092 for information or to schedule an appointment.

Future Lakeview Community Wellness Center Clinic dates are November 20, December 4 and December 20, 2009.

There is a ton of accurate information about all the Orthopaedic conditions I treat on the office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com, which can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection. Please check it out.

As always we are happy to answer questions from readers. You can e-mail me at orthopodsurgeon@hotmail.com or write to me at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan 48801.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush