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To: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Walking to Get in Shape - Smooth Fitness

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The Fitness & Health Report

April 8, 2004 - Issue 63

For Customers of Smooth Fitness



In this Issue:

- Walking to Get in Shape
- Latest Health and Fitness News

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Walking to Get in Shape

Walking, as a form of exercise, is catching on. Many people hate the word "exercise." They cringe at the thought of actually engaging in "exercise." However, given a choice between being overweight, giving up favorite foods to lose weight, or controlling weight through exercise, walking doesn't seem like such a bad choice.

Yes! There are many activities in which one could engage to burn enough calories to lose or maintain weight. You could jog. You could ride a bicycle. And, then, there's swimming and rowing and skiing and...The list goes on and on. For numerous individuals, such activities seem much too strenuous or require developing some sort of skills. Walking, on the other hand, is something the majority of us know how to do; and, we do it every single day of our lives!

Walking and Losing Weight

Not too long ago, I heard from a reader who said that she was somewhat overweight. She stated that she had begun walking several minutes a day and was striving to increase the length of her walks. This reader didn't enjoy jogging. But, she was concerned that walking might not be sufficient exercise to contribute to weight-loss. The fact is that regular walking CAN lead to shedding extra fat!

Before you begin any exercise program, be sure to check with your doctor to make sure it's okay to do so. In most cases, your doctor is going to tell you that it is perfectly alright to begin a walking program. After all, walking isn't all that

strenuous. It isn't all that hard on your body. The impact is low. Your health will likely benefit from walking. However, there ARE those people who would be taking a health risk by going out for a walk. So, get your doc's permission before taking any unnecessary risks.

David A. Rives, author of *Walk Yourself Thin* and *Dying for a Smoke*, stresses that exercise programs, such as walking, work differently than dieting. He suggests working up to at least an hour of walking each day to achieve the most benefits. Also, Mr. Rives doesn't advocate dieting. According to him, "with the diet, you burned fat to make up for some calories you didn't eat." Rives writes, "with the 'diet,' you had only one thing happening: a pound of fat disappearing, which meant you lost a pound of weight."

Through walking, "two things happen: that pound of fat still disappears, but now a pound of new muscles shows up in its place!" (He calls his walking program "Thinwalking.") He goes on to say that "at the end of each Thinwalking day, instead of being one pound short, like you were on your diet, you find that you're 'no pounds short'-but you're still one 'pound' skinnier!" After all, as you burn fat through walking, you'll be changing that pound of fat into a pound of muscle. And, since muscle takes up less space than fat, you may weigh the same (or, even gain a little weight). However, you'll look thinner!

One thing you need to remember when walking is that, to lose the fat and build the muscle, you have to actually walk fast enough and long enough for the walk to be considered "exercise." Keep in mind, however, that you should always start out your walks slowly and gradually increase your speed, so that your muscles have a chance to warm up. This will also prevent you from wearing down too soon and allow you to go longer distances.

The key note to remember is this: "walk as fast as you comfortably can for as long as you comfortably can!" (Rives, *Walk Yourself Thin*, p. 12) After you've been actively participating in your walking program for awhile, you'll be surprised to see how much faster and how much farther you're able to go than when you first began the program.

Walking is for Everyone

One of the great things about walking (and running) is that you don't need any special equipment or skills. You merely need a comfortable pair of walking shoes, appropriate clothing, and the desire and determination to get out there and WALK!

You can make walking an adventure by discovering new places and/or taking notice of the wonders of Nature during your exercise. And, if you don't care to walk outdoors, you can always walk on a treadmill! If you consistently walk far enough and fast enough, you won't have to worry about avoiding your favorite foods or starving yourself to lose the fat. Your body was created to move, not to be idle. Use your body as it was intended to be used, and you'll find your body looking and feeling the way it was intended to look and feel...slim, healthy, and energetic!

[Cyndi Schoenhals](#)

CPT and fitness writer

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Fitness and Health News

Develop a walk before running first 5K

Running is one of the oldest forms of exercise, although its popularity has been sporadic. Despite years of controversy, it is making a huge comeback. [Read Entire Article](#)

Tune up your fitness routine and get in shape for spring

If you took the winter off from exercising, start slowly, suggests Aliesa George, owner of Centerworks Pilates. [Read Entire Article](#)

Can't face the gym? Try the living room

Three months into the year, and some of you might have already stopped going to the gym. Maybe it's just not working out because you aren't having fun. You might want to consider working out at home. [Read Entire Article](#)

We're getting too fat

It's a health issue. A financial issue. A legal issue. A political issue. A character issue. A psychological issue. Obesity is a hot topic on lots of fronts. America's latest epidemic is becoming a media in "fat"uation. [Read Entire Article](#)

Exercising to music smart idea say researchers

If music makes you smarter, and exercise helps brain function, can exercising to music really boost brainpower? American researchers say it can. [Read Entire Article](#)

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