

## **StepWell Walking Program Guidelines**

### **NMCP Wellness Dept**

#### **(Updated July 2011)**

**Walking is one of the body's most natural forms of exercise. It is simple and provides many health benefits.**

#### **Program Description**

The StepWell Walking Program is a self-paced walking program that offers professional guidance from Health Promotion and Wellness Dept, NMCP. Health Promotion works collaboratively with MWR, Command Fitness and Clinical Nutrition to enhance the health of NMCP beneficiaries by improving fitness education and awareness.

#### **Program Mission**

The mission is to disseminate health information that may motivate employees and family members to begin and/or maintain an active lifestyle. According to CDC and Cooper Institute, we have become a sedentary nation with many cardiovascular deaths being associated with inactivity. There is clear evidence that exercise reduces health risks associated with high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and much more.

#### **Why Should You Join NMCP StepWell Walking Program?**

Walking has the lowest dropout rate of all aerobic exercise programs according to Cooper Institute. Walking can be done almost anywhere at any time and is likely the best exercise for most people.

Members will have access to the following:

- Walking maps
- Prizes for 100 miles of walking
- StepWell Newsletters via email
- Fitness Education through; Right Weigh classes, email group and health fairs
- Periodic Monitoring of:
  - Blood pressure
  - Weight
  - Body Fat Analysis
  - Food log analysis

To Register and get connected please email [alice.fitzpatrick@med.navy.mil](mailto:alice.fitzpatrick@med.navy.mil).

#### **What are the Benefits of Walking?**

- Reduces the risk of heart attack
- Manages high blood pressure
- Reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes
- Manages diabetes
- Manages weight
- Manages stress and improves your mood
- You remain strong and active as you age

#### **How to Get Started:**

- Make sure you are safe to start a walking program
- Check with your physician before starting a walking program, especially if you have a chronic condition, injuries, recent surgeries, or are over the age of 40. If in doubt, check with your doctor. (Reference ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription)

**Setting Goals:**

- Set initial goals and adjust them as your fitness improves. If you are not regularly active, start with small goals and as you improve, shoot for bigger goals. Try to work towards a goal of a minimum of 30 min of exercise, 5 days per week.

**Exercise Safety:**

- Comfortable walking shoes and clothing: Wear loose fitting clothes and wear layers appropriate for the environment. If outside, dress appropriately for weather and wear reflective clothing to assure you are visible.
- Keep a water bottle on hand
- Walk in a safe environment
- Get a walking buddy

**Warm up:**

- Spend at least 5 minutes warming up your muscles by walking in place or gradually increasing your pace to avoid injury. When your muscles are warm, mild stretching can be done.

**Walking:**

- Relax and make your walk enjoyable.
- Monitor your intensity. You should be able to talk in short sentences. If not, you need to decrease your pace.
- Keep your posture natural and relaxed.
- Walk with a buddy or two.
- Vary your routine to keep you motivated.

**Cooling Down:**

- Cooling down is just as important as warming up. Gradually slow your pace, which will slowly decrease your heart rate. Keep walking until your heart rate falls below 110 bpm (beats per minute).
- Pat yourself on the back. Praise yourself for your accomplishment.

**Walking E-Resources:**

- America on The Move, <http://aom.americaonthemove.org>
- American Heart Association Walking Program, <http://www.startwalkingnow.org/home.jsp>
- Discover Walking site, <http://www.discoverwalking.com/blog/shake-up-your-walk.php>

○ American Council on Exercise (ACE) Exercise Library,  
<http://www.acefitness.org/getfit/default.aspx>

○ Mayo Clinic Fitness site,  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fitness/MY00396>

**Nutrition E-resources:**

○ National Institutes of Health (NIH),  
[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose\\_wt/index.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/index.htm)

○ MyPlate, <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

○ Cooking Light site, [www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com)