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USA TODAY

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magazine

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# Dive In!

FITNESS SPAS BLEND  
ACTIVITY AND RELAXATION



# Getting up to speed

Want a fat-burning boost? Try power walking BY NANCY HELLMICH

If you're already mountain climbing, kayaking and biking, you might think power walking is too pedestrian. But the truth is, you can make big strides in toning your body while increasing your aerobic fitness by regularly taking power walks. And for busy people who want an efficient way to work out, it's the "best bang for the buck," says Mark Fenton, author of *The Complete Guide to Walking for Health, Weight Loss and Fitness*.

Also called "speed walking" or "aerobic walking," power walking is vigorous enough to feel like a good workout, even to someone who is fit. "It's low impact, weight bearing and has as high a calorie output as you can get without running," Fenton says. "It firms up your core and is great for your legs, buttocks and abdominal muscles."

The benefits don't stop there. "Power walking is great for your lungs. It increases your breathing capacity and helps you maximize your cardio output," says Timothy

Gardner, a heart surgeon and president of the American Heart Association, which sponsors Start! Heart Walks all year long.

Speed is the key. Many exercisers walk with purpose but not speed, Fenton says: "If you can talk easily and continuously without being at all breathless during your workout, then you're probably not power walking."

People can naturally walk at a pace of about 3.3 to 3.8 mph, which is called purposeful walking. Push yourself to go 4 mph and you're power walking, Fenton says.

A big advantage of picking up the pace is that the extra speed will help you burn more calories. "If you weigh about 150 pounds and walk for an hour at 3 mph, you'll burn roughly 250 calories. If you crank it up to 4 mph, you'll burn closer to 400 calories," Fenton says.

Not only does power walking help control weight, it's also easier on joints than some other activities.

Weekend warrior Jon Schriner,



## Power walking is low impact, weight bearing and almost as effective as running.

### 5 TIPS FOR POWER WALKING

**KEEP YOUR POSTURE TALL** with your shoulders back, your chest open and your abdominal muscles gently contracted.

**BEND YOUR ARMS** at a 90-degree angle for a quick, compact arm swing.

**PUSH OFF THE GROUND VIGOROUSLY** with your toes at the end of each stride you take.

**WORK YOUR WAY UP** to taking 150 steps per minute (see the watches below for some monitoring options). Your stride will lengthen naturally as you move toward power-walking speed.

**TRY TO MAINTAIN YOUR STEP RATE** when going up and down hills. Note that your stride will shorten naturally when going up and lengthen when going down.

## TIME ZONE

by Keith W. Strandberg

**WATCH YOUR STEP** OUR EXPERT FOUND THREE TOP TIMEPIECES TO HELP YOU MONITOR YOUR SPEED, DISTANCE AND HEART RATE.



**POLAR FT60 TRAINING COMPUTER** offers an easy-to-use heart-rate monitor, training zone alarms, a fitness test, the Polar STAR training program, a chronograph and dual time-zone function. \$239.95, [polarusa.com](http://polarusa.com)



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**THE T6C FROM SUUNTO** features a heart-rate monitor, calories burned, real-time "training effect" display, interval timer, dual time zones and the ability to sync and track info with your computer. \$429, [suunto.com](http://suunto.com)