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FITNESS SPAS BLEND
ACTIVITY AND RELAXATION



Getting up to speed

Want a fat-burning boost? Try power walking **BY NANCI 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 Schriener,

72, enjoys running, skiing and mountain climbing, all of which can be punishing on joints. About eight years ago, he added power walking to his workout regimen. He says it keeps him in good aerobic and muscular shape for the sports he loves, with minimal stress on his knees.

Again, speed is key. Schriener, the medical director of the Michigan Center for Athletic Medicine in Flushing, says that when he power walks, he pushes himself, often going as fast as 5 mph.

To increase your walking speed and maximize the benefits, follow Fenton's top five tips (*at right*) for power walking — the right way.

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



TIMEX IRONMAN TRIATHLON BODYLINK combines everything you need in a sports watch plus dual time-zone display and a GPS unit that gives precise speed, distance and altitude information. \$300, timex.com



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 **oa**