

Walk It

Out!

**Cindy Ng, Senior Physiotherapist,
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shows you how to get a good aerobic and cardiovascular workout with something as simple as walking.

It requires no hefty gym fees, expensive machinery or personal trainer. It's the easiest form of exercise but the most overlooked. We are talking about walking.

Walking is a very effective form of exercise and forms part of the Diabetes Prevention Program developed by Diabetes Prevention Program Lifestyle Resource Core (University of Pittsburgh) where it has been shown to prevent or delay onset of diabetes for those with impaired glucose tolerance. As such, exercise as simple as walking, is important to reduce risk of developing diabetes.

How much do I walk and how fast, you ask? Intensity is important. If Madam A takes a stroll in the garden for an hour while Madam B brisk walks at 5km/h for 40 minutes, who will display a greater improvement in their glucose profile? The answer is obvious. It will be Madam B. Why? Intensity. How do we determine one's level of intensity? The guide below shows you the different Rates of Perceived Exertion or RPE.

Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

0	Nothing
0.5	Very, very weak
1	Very weak
2	Weak
3	Moderate
4	Somewhat strong
5	Strong
6	
7	Very strong
8	
9	
10	Very, very strong (Maximal)

When doing any aerobic based exercises, such as walking, swimming, cycling or even using a cross trainer/elliptical cycle, you can use the scale above to gauge your exertion.

Urinary Tract Infections (UTI) are disorders involving a repeated or prolonged bacterial infection of the bladder or lower urinary tract. Most urinary tract infections occur in the lower urinary tract, which includes the bladder and urethra.

A slow walk will probably be a on a scale of 0 to 2. Brisk walking (moderate intensity) will be at the scale of 4 to 6, where you may still be able to talk in full sentences but you are perspiring a little and feeling a little short of breath.

An extremely intense activity such as high level step aerobics may give an RPE of 8 where you may start grunting and finding it tough to speak in full sentences.

Walking at an RPE of 4 to 6 will be ideal. To achieve this, you should be covering a distance of 2.4km in 20 minutes to get a moderately intense workout. Other forms of aerobic exercises include treadmill walking, stationary cycling or the cross trainer.

Investing in a good pair of track shoes is important, especially those with diabetes as they may have altered sensations of the feet and those who suffer other medical conditions or complications.

If in doubt, please consult a therapist who will conduct a graded exercise test before prescribing specific exercises.

Aerobic Exercises have proven to be effective therapeutic tools, provided you do them regularly (at least three times a week) at an appropriate moderate intensity for a duration of at least 20 minutes each session.

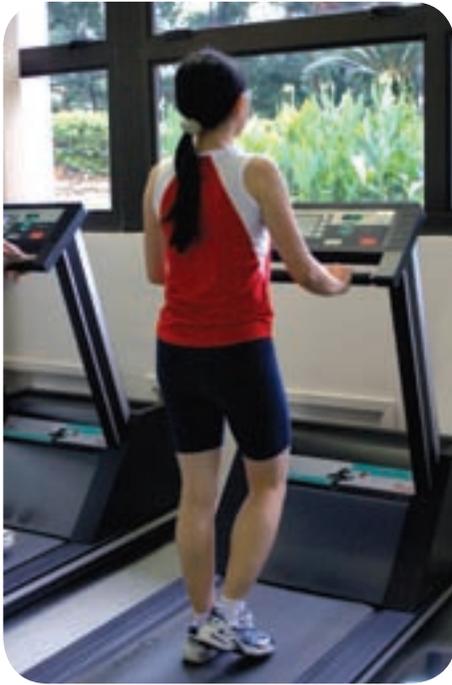
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2. American College of Sports Medicine Position Stand: Exercise and type 2 diabetes. *Medicine & Sports in Science & Exercise*, 32(7), 1345-1360.
3. Diabetes Prevention Research Group. (2002). Reduction in the incidence of type 2 diabetes with lifestyle intervention or metformin. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol 346, No. 6, 393-403

If you are not a fan of the outdoors, the sun and the heat, then head for the cool confines of the gym or set up your personal gym at home.

The stationary bicycle, treadmill and cross trainer are all aerobic, cardiovascular machines. They generally tone and build your leg muscles. A significant benefit of the stationary bicycle and the cross trainer is that they are low impact and do not cause undue stress on your joints as your feet never leave the 'ground'.

A beginner should start slow and easy on a bicycle or a treadmill.



Treadmill: Rain or shine, you can have a good brisk walk or jog.

The intensity depends on your fitness level and often I would advise you to start walking on the treadmill at a speed of 2.5 to 4km/h for 15 to 20 minutes, increasing the timing by 5 minutes every one to two weeks.



Stationary Bicycle: takes the load off your weight. Ideal for beginners.

The stationary bike takes some load off your weight because you are seated. The cross trainer adds a different dimension to the workout - it allows full range of knee movements in standing- burns more calories and is more challenging. It is similar to cycling except that you are standing instead of sitting.



Cross Trainer: burns more calories than the treadmill and bicycle.

The cross trainer is a higher intensity machine and is more suitable for those who may find the bicycle and treadmill not challenging enough. They can progress to the cross trainer and pedal at 60 to 100rpm for ten to 20 minutes.

Women are more susceptible to UTIs than men because their urethra is shorter and it's a short pathway for bacteria to get to the bladder. UTIs in men may not be so common but they can be very serious if they do occur.