

## INCREASING WALKING INTENSITY

What can recreational strollers do to intensify the activity of their walks other than try to move faster?

1. Pumps your arms, pulling elbows back rather than moving fists forward. The faster the arm pumps, the faster the walk pace. Keep your shoulders relaxed.
2. Take more, but smaller steps
3. Hold your hands such that the angle of the elbow is about 90-120 degrees, brushing the outside of your hips with each arm swing.
4. Perform hill intervals/repeats: Walk up hills or inclines in a garage; the one will do. Find a hill/incline that takes about 30 seconds to climb. After a 10-minute warm-up walk on a flat surface, move briskly up, holding your body erect and tall, head up and looking forward, without bending too much at the waist, pumping arms to help propel yourself forward. Walk down at a slower recovery pace.

Repeat the brisk-ascent then recovery-descent 3-4 times. Walk the flat surface for 2 minutes. Then perform another set of 3-4 hill up-downs followed by a flat surface 2-minute walk. Stop at 2 sets or try for 3 sets. Finish with a 10-minute cool-down walk. Work toward Increasing the repetitions to 5-6 times per set.

5. Insert skipping sequences into your walks. Low skips at first; high knee skips if you have the aerobic capacity. Walk a minute, skip 30 seconds. Repeat 5 times. Walk 2 minutes. Repeat this set 3 times if you are able. Work progressively to reverse the sequence such that eventually you are walking 30 seconds and skipping for a minute.
6. Incorporate body weight strength exercises in your walk at set intervals. Walk loops in a park or area where there are benches or low walls on which you can perform the exercises each time you reach one.

Triceps dips, and modified push-ups can be done on the benches. Sturdy low walls work well for step-ups/downs. Try doing them first in a forward direction, 5-10 times each leg stepping up, then from the side, each leg 5-10 times. Repeat this forward/side set 2-3 times, resting 1-2 minutes between each set. Planks can be done anywhere on the ground but may be most comfortable on a nice patch of grass or track surface.

Practice abdominal breathing as you walk. With each inhalation, the tummy should move out as the diaphragm is contracted and pulled down to draw air into the lungs. With each exhalation, the tummy moves back as the diaphragm relaxes into its non-contracted position.

Be alert to your surroundings for personal safety at all times, especially if you are walking predictable loops.

Pay attention to your body's hydration needs, as always in the warmed months.