

About walking

Green-Schools Travel



Walking is one of the easiest ways to be more physically active and plays a significant role in reducing the risk of heart disease. Walking is a great way to burn calories, tone arms and leg and is a form of exercise that does not need expensive equipment, is accessible to everyone and is free.

Benefits of walking

- Gives you more energy
- Makes you feel good
- Helps you sleep better
- Helps manage stress
- Tones muscles
- Burns calories
- Strengthens your heart
- Lowers your blood pressure and cholesterol
- Helps keep bones strong
- Reduces the risk of developing diabetes

How much activity do we need?



Your body was designed for physical activity, and without enough exercise it starts to slow down, clog up and become **unhealthy**.

- Adults need at least **30 minutes** of physical activity on 5 or more days of the week. This should be of moderate intensity.
- Children need **one hour** every day. This physical activity should be of moderate intensity e.g. a brisk walk to school!

What does moderate intensity physical activity feel like?

A moderate level of activity noticeably increases your heart rate and breathing rate. Power walking or Stride walking would be an example of moderate intensity walking. You may sweat, but you are still able to carry on a conversation. You can talk, but you can't sing.

Moderate-intensity activities use large muscle groups and include brisk walking, swimming, bicycling, dancing, gardening and even housework, such as tidying your room.

You can reach your target quickly by including walking into your normal daily routine. For example;

- choose to **walk to school or home from school instead of driving** and increase your pace every day.
- If you cannot walk all the way, why not walk some....this is called '**Park & Stride**' and is where you park away from the school and walk the remaining distance

- Think about your day...do all of your activities add up to your daily target?
- Do you know how to walk properly? Try activities 1-3 to find out

Walking Activities

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Activity 1: Good Posture

Posture is the position in which you hold your body upright against gravity while standing, sitting or lying down. Good posture involves training your body to stand, walk, sit and lie in positions where the least strain is placed on supporting muscles and ligaments during movement or weight-bearing activities.

Benefits of proper posture

- Keeps bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are being used properly.
- Helps decrease the abnormal wearing of joint surfaces that could result in arthritis.
- Decreases the stress on ligaments holding the joints of the spine together.
- Prevents the spine from becoming fixed in abnormal positions.
- Prevents fatigue because muscles are being used more efficiently, allowing the body to use less energy.
- Prevents strain and overuse problems.
- Prevents backache and muscular pain.

Good Posture when standing

- Stand with weight mostly on the balls of the feet, not with the weight on the heels. Avoid locking the knees.
- Keep feet slightly apart, about shoulder-width.
- Let the arms hang naturally down the sides of the body.
- Tuck the chin in a little to keep the head level. Be sure the head is square on top of the neck and spine, not pushed out forward.
- Stand straight and tall, with shoulders upright.
- Stand against a wall with the shoulders and bottom touching the wall. In this position, the back of the head should also touch the wall – if it does not, the head is too far forward.

Good Posture when walking

- Keep the head up and eyes looking straight ahead. Avoid pushing your head forward.
- Keep shoulders properly aligned with the rest of the body.

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Instructions

1. Give a brief explanation of what good posture is and why it is important.
2. Demonstrate good and bad posture when standing and walking and get the group to copy your movements.
3. Get the group to practice their posture when standing and walking by asking them to stand/walk with good and bad posture e.g.
4. Get them to walk in a line alternating between good/bad posture. Ask them if they feel a difference as they go along.

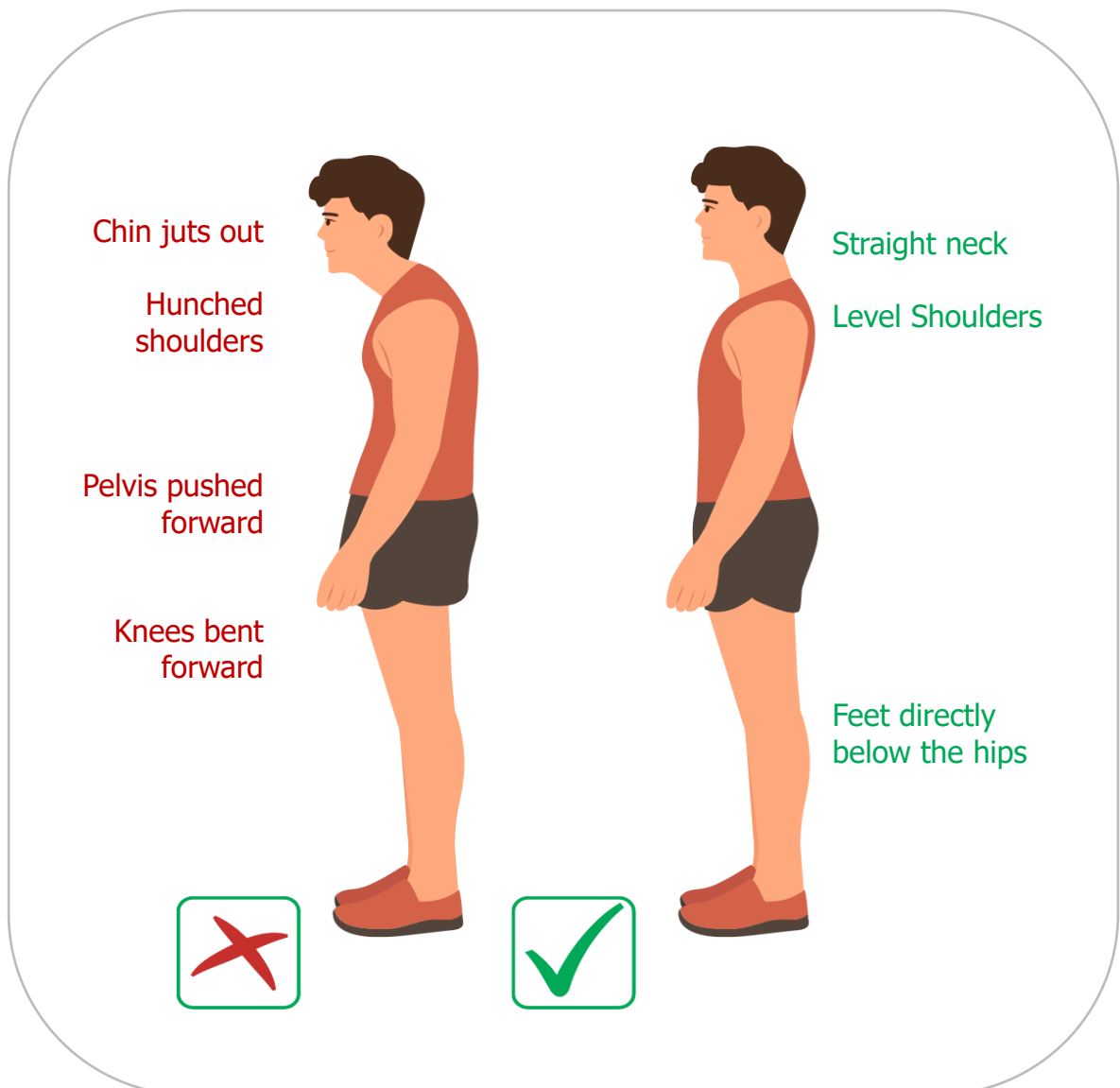


Diagram 1 : Posture – right and wrong

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Activity 2: Stride Walking

What is 'stride walking'

A 'stride' is a walk with long steps. Many people walk around with steps that don't utilize enough muscles and are way too little to get anywhere fast. You can elongate your stride, which uses more of the muscles, without feeling like you are on stilts and find a comfortable walking stride with a few simple steps.

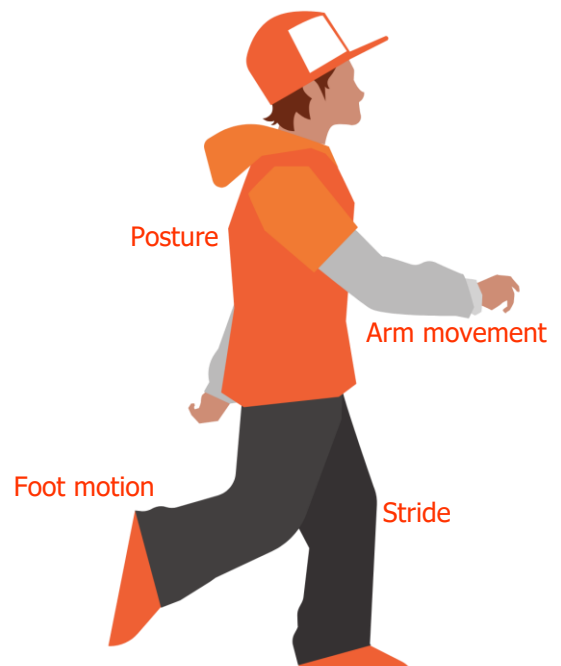
Instructions

1. Explain what stride walking is and demonstrate
2. Instruct your students to:
 - **Walk naturally** from one end of a yard to the other.
 - Walk across the yard again with the **longest stride** you can muster.
 - **Pick a stride** in between your regular walking stride and your longest strides.
 - Begin to **swing your arms** as you walk, until you fall into a comfortable rhythm as you practice your newfound stride.
 - Remember good posture; **keep your head up** and **eyes looking straight ahead**. Avoid pushing your head forward.
 - Consciously practice this stride every time you walk until it falls into place with no thought at all.
3. Create a circuit around the school yard.
4. Start off leading the group until they are stride walking around the circuit following each other.
5. Once the students know the circuit you can drop out and observe, calling out encouragement or tips on the stride walking technique.

Tip – remember good posture!

Extension

Ask the students to feel their heartbeat before they start walking and afterwards to see if their heart beats faster. They should notice that they have done some aerobic movement!



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Activity 2: Power Walking (10mins)

What is 'Power Walking'

Power walking also known as speed walking, is a cross between regular walking and jogging. Power walkers walk at a speed at or near the speed at which most people would break into a jog. Watch this [video](#) to find out more

Benefit of Power-Walking

- It keeps your mind sharp and is good for your heart.
- It is low-impact on the joints compared to running.

Power-walking rules

- The walker must walk straight doing an alternative movement of feet and arms
- The walker must walk with one foot in permanent contact with the ground.
- The leading leg must be bent
- Each advancing foot strike must be heel to toe at all times

Instructions

1. Explain the technique of power walking.

A. Develop a posture for power walking

- Stand up straight, without bowing your back or leaning forward. Holding your core straight will help your muscles work together and increase your walking speed.
- Look ahead, not down, and focus on a point about 20 feet in front of you.
- Hold your head up, with your chin parallel to the ground, to avoid neck pain.
- Relax your shoulders.
- Hold your abdominal muscles firm.
- Avoid allowing your hips to rock from side to side. This kind of motion is counterproductive. It will slow you down.

B. Keep your arms under control

- Bend your elbows to about 90 degrees. Keep them in close to your body.
- Allow your hands to relax in a slightly curled position.
- Swing your arms forward, alternating with your step. Your hands should not cross your chest.
- Stride forward with one foot with your heel striking the ground first.
- Roll your foot forward and push off with your toes.

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Activity 2: Power Walking (10mins)

1. Explain the technique of power walking (continued)
 - Bring your other foot forward just as you are pushing off with the toes of the front foot.
 - Take smaller steps. Over-striding is inefficient. It will slow down your power walk.
2. Demonstrate the techniques and get the group to copy your movements. Then get the group to practice their techniques by asking them to alternate between stride walking, jogging and power walking.
3. Ask them if they feel a difference. You could also Ask the students to feel their heartbeat before they start walking and afterwards to see if their heart beats faster. They should notice that they have done some aerobic movement!



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Activity 3: Walking Relay Race (10mins)

Outline Students have to **stride** walk then **power** walk to reach the flipchart paper stuck on the wall where they write down reasons 'what's good about walking

Materials Large piece of paper, chalk, markers

- Activity**
- Divide the class into even teams, not too big....8 is the perfect size a little bigger or smaller is fine.
 - Mark a line (with tape or chalk) on the ground in front of each team. This is their start line and they must line up behind it.
 - Stick a sheet of large paper on the wall for each team. The paper will be opposite to the starting point for each team.
 - They will answer them one at a time. If there is any crossing over i.e. next person starts before their team member crosses back over the line then the judges can stop them and give them a 3 second time penalty.
 - One at a time students will speed walk to the paper and write down a question about your chosen topic (what's good about walking or why is walking to school of benefit) they will then speed walk back to their team.
 - Once the team member is back over the line then the next team member can then speed walk up to write down their answer.
 - Each team member must come up at least once - the team runs itself as a relay team. E.g. line up, the person in front speed walks to the paper and when they return they go to the back of the line.
 - The team can discuss as a group and feed an answer to the person in front.
 - When all people in the team have been up once they must then change techniques and power walk to write down their answer.
 - Once the relay is over, you can go through the answers written on the paper and recap or conclude the lesson.

Tip – if the group will find it too hard to write down an answer you could have a teacher/helper for each team. The team members have to walk up to the teacher/helper and verbally give them an answer. The teacher/helper should keep a score of how many answers are given.