



Plan your walking route

Use these guidelines to plan your walking routes for safe and enjoyable walking.

If you are new to walking it can sometimes be tricky to get the length of your walk right - because this will vary according to your fitness, general health and weight. The amount of time you have available for your walk is a factor, too.

Do you prefer early morning or other hours of the day? The time of day can influence where you walk. The best time to exercise is the time that works best for you.

If you have a variety of routes at different distances you can choose one that suits how you are that day. A few short routes are good for starting out on a walking routine and/or for when you just don't feel up to coping with a longer walk or you lack time.

What kind of access, or not, to toilets do you want on your walks? Walking in a mall provides you with facilities and is a safe environment. Walking in the early mornings helps to avoid busy periods.

If you are walking outside, get to know where any facilities are - check out your local maps, parks, and bike trails.

Find out whether schools or colleges will let you walk around their tracks or playing fields - check the local parks to find out what facilities are available and whether they have walking groups which you could join.

Your mood can affect how you feel on your walk, so have a selection of routes planned - do you want to be surrounded by people or want the peace and quiet of a park or country lane?

If you opt for the countryside or even a park, do check what the ground is like underfoot - dirt tracks, bark, walking on sandy or muddy paths use more energy than walking on a flat level surface and can often be hazardous underfoot.

You don't need to have a large selection of walks planned (unless of course you want to!)

- Try planning a couple of short ones
- Two medium ones
- Two longer ones.

Planning your walking routes helps to build a walking routine into your life and leads to opportunities to explore neighborhoods, bike paths, parks, and more.

Thanks to the computer selecting and creating walking routes is easier than ever. Visit <http://www.gmap-pedometer.com/> and create a walk just for you. Perhaps you have a Garmin GPS unit. This can be very helpful in plotting your route as you go. You may use your car to drive areas; or better yet, ride your bike.

I like to have a variety of miles as well as locations to mix it up. Have fun selecting your route. Perhaps you have a favorite you'd like to share with the WalkQuest readership?