

Warm up to walking

It's important to warm up the muscles before heading out for a walk. Here are five simple stretches to get you going. Repeat each three times with both legs.

1. Calf Stretch

Stand an arm's length from a wall. Place one leg forward, knee bent. Extend the other back, knee straight, heel down. Keeping back straight, move hips toward the wall until you feel a stretch in the extended leg. Hold 15 to 30 seconds.

2. Quadriceps Stretch

With one hand on a wall for support, grasp your ankle with your other hand and gently pull the heel up and back until you feel a stretch in the front of your thigh. Tighten stomach muscles. Maintain a constant, gentle stretch and hold for 30 seconds.

3. Hamstring Stretch

Sit with one leg on another chair. Keep back straight and slowly bend your pelvis forward at the hip until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Hold 30 seconds.

4. Lower Back Stretch

Lie on your back on the floor with knees bent and feet flat. Pull the left knee gently toward your chest with both hands (if you have knee problems, pull from the back of the thigh). Hold 15 to 30 seconds.

5. Chest Stretch

Clasp your hands behind your head. Pull the elbows gently back by pinching shoulder blades together, inhaling deeply. Hold 15 to 30 seconds, breathing normally.

– *source: Mayo Clinic*