

walk off the *weight*

You don't need hours in a gym to get results. Lace up your sneakers with this four-week plan designed by fitness editor **Martha Lourey-Bird**

Want a cheap, easy and effective way to lose weight and stay active? Look no further than walking. This four-week plan is ideal because it gradually increases the intensity and time for each walk. First up, work out whether you're a beginner or already active when it comes to walking for exercise. If you're already active and think the first week's too easy, skip to a week that better suits your ability. Be sure to change your route, including hills, steps, intervals and location, to keep things interesting. You might also want to enlist a friend for motivation.

Staying on track

To make sure you stay on track with the program, keep a record of your walks in your tracker or diary and, at the end of the week, tally up how many hours you've walked. If you have a pedometer, record your steps and aim for about 10,000 each day.

If you miss a day, don't worry – keep going and don't try to make up the time another day.

Good walking technique

- Lead with heel, stand tall with shoulders back.
- Easy pace: no hard breathing, you're able to both talk and sing easily.
- Brisk pace: puffing slightly, you're able to have a conversation, but not sing.
- Hard pace: you're huffing and puffing, and only able to talk briefly.

WEEK ONE

Week day	Beginner	Already active
Monday	10 mins – easy pace	20 mins – brisk pace
Tuesday	10 mins – easy pace	20 mins – brisk pace
Wednesday	10 mins – easy pace	20 mins – brisk pace
Thursday	Day off	Day off
Friday	15 mins – easy pace	30 mins – brisk pace
Saturday	15 mins – easy pace	30 mins – brisk pace
Sunday	Day off	Active choice

WEEK TWO

Week day	Beginner	Already active
Monday	15 mins – easy pace	30 mins – brisk pace
Tuesday	15 mins – brisk pace	30 mins – brisk pace
Wednesday	15 mins – easy pace	30 mins – brisk pace
Thursday	15 mins – brisk pace	20 mins – hard pace
Friday	15 mins – easy pace	30 mins – brisk pace
Saturday	15 mins – brisk pace	30 mins – brisk pace
Sunday	Day off	Day off/Active choice

WEEK THREE

Week day	Beginner	Already active
Monday	20 mins – brisk pace	40 mins – brisk pace
Tuesday	20 mins – brisk pace	20 mins – hard pace
Wednesday	20 mins – brisk pace	40 mins – brisk pace
Thursday	20 mins – brisk pace	20 mins – hard pace
Friday	20 mins – brisk pace	40 mins – brisk pace
Saturday	20 mins – brisk pace	20 mins – hard pace
Sunday	Day off/Active choice	Active choice

WEEK FOUR

Week day	Beginner	Already active
Monday	30 mins – brisk pace	45 mins – brisk pace
Tuesday	30 mins – brisk pace	30 mins – alternate intervals of 5 mins brisk pace to 5 mins hard pace
Wednesday	30 mins – brisk pace	45 mins – brisk pace
Thursday	30 mins – brisk pace	30 mins – alternate intervals of 5 mins brisk pace to 5 mins hard pace
Friday	30 mins – brisk pace	45 mins – brisk pace
Saturday	30 mins – brisk pace	30 mins – alternate intervals of 5 mins brisk pace to 5 mins hard pace
Sunday	Active choice	Active choice



Safety tip

Warm up by beginning at a slower pace and cool down when you're finished with static stretches. Wear supportive footwear and carry drinking water.