

3 Walking Tips for...

Walking tips for children and families

Statistics show that Australian children are living increasingly inactive lives. Suggestions on encouraging your child to enjoy regular walks include:

- Schedule a regular family walk - this is a great way to pass on healthy habits to children, spend time together and get fit at the same time
- Make sure the route/length of time spent walking is appropriate for your children's age
Handy hint - approximately 1km per birthday is a good rule, with breaks
- Start good habits early. Take young babies and toddlers for walks in their pram, and as they get older encourage them to walk part of the way.
- Look for self-guided nature walks set up in many parks. Younger children enjoy looking for numbered posts; older ones can learn about plants and animals, and perhaps take photos or record their experience in other ways.
- Encourage your child to walk the dog more, or consider getting a dog as it can promote regular walking
- Boost your child's interest in outdoor activities by visiting some of the region's scenic areas and organising fun activities
- Encourage your child's interest in nature through books and websites, then follow-up with walking 'field trips' so they can discover their favourite animals, plants or places for themselves

Walking tips for older adults

Walking is an excellent form of exercise for older adults - it's easy on your body, free and high in health benefits.

- If you have health concerns, see a doctor for a medical check-up before starting a new fitness program
- Contact Parks Victoria for information on suitable parks and reserves in your area. Web: www.parkweb.vic.gov.au Phone: 131 963
- Consider joining a walking club specific to your needs and age group
- Consider starting up a walking club in your area with friends or neighbours

Tips for people with disabilities

People with disabilities will also benefit from regular exercise.

- See a doctor for a medical check-up before starting any new fitness program
- Parks Victoria can provide information about which parks and reserves offer special access (such as wheelchair access) and facilities.
Web: www.parkweb.vic.gov.au Phone: 131 963
- The Access for All Abilities (AAA) Program run through the Centre Active Recreation Network (CARN) can assist people with disabilities to access walking and other activities. Phone 5721 0231 for more information.
- An able-bodied person can assist someone with a disability to better enjoy their neighbourhood walk or bush walk. For example, a sighted companion can warn a vision-impaired person of upcoming obstacles.
- National parks allow guide dogs for vision-impaired people

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This information has been sourced from Kinect Australia (inc VICFIT in Victoria), the Better Health Channel, Parks Victoria and The Department of Human Services through the Go for your life website. See Fact Sheet 11 for details.

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