

Thrive Across America**healthwörks**
by KAISER PERMANENTE.

Perfecting your stride



Walking is a simple, convenient way to get your body moving. To walk for fitness, there's no reason to pump your arms wildly or sway your hips to and fro—in fact, a more natural stride is recommended:

- Stand up straight, keeping your chin up and shoulders back.
- Look ahead about 20 feet—don't stare at your feet.
- Bend your elbows comfortably (about 90 degrees) and relax your hands.
- Keep your elbows in as your arms move naturally with your walking.
- Maintain a comfortable stride—bigger steps don't increase the fitness level, but they can increase your risk of injury by placing additional pressure on your joints, hips, and back.
- Start at a slower pace, allowing your muscles to warm up before you pick up speed.

After walking, you may want to spend a few minutes doing gentle stretches. Stretching after exercise when your muscles are warmed up can help prevent soreness, where as stretching cold muscles is not a great idea; cold muscles are not as flexible and can be easily strained.

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