

Mall Walking

Walking is great exercise, and walking in the mall is second only to walking in neighborhoods in popularity.

Malls are great places to walk because they provide a sheltered indoor space free from traffic and bad weather.

There are many benefits to walking in the mall:

- You can walk alone or with a group. Even if you arrive at the mall alone, you'll probably meet other walkers. The support of others can help motivate you to keep going.
- It's convenient. Although a formal mall walking program may have set hours, you can also set your own schedule, and walk any time the mall is open.
- Malls are easy to get to. Many have bus stops on site or nearby.
- Malls are pedestrian-friendly. They have level floors, benches or other places to rest, water fountains, and accessible restrooms.
- It's free. You might be tempted to window-shop, but you don't have to buy anything. If you do shop, some stores may give discounts to mall walkers.
- You don't need special exercise equipment other than comfortable walking shoes.
- Walkers of all ages and fitness levels are welcome.
- Malls are accessible to those with varying physical abilities.
- You can walk at your own pace. As you get used to walking, increase the frequency, intensity, and/or duration of your walk to improve your fitness. Try taking the stairs to the second level instead of the escalator.
- Mall walking is non-competitive. You can exercise and socialize in a friendly environment.
- Security staff help make malls a safe place to walk.



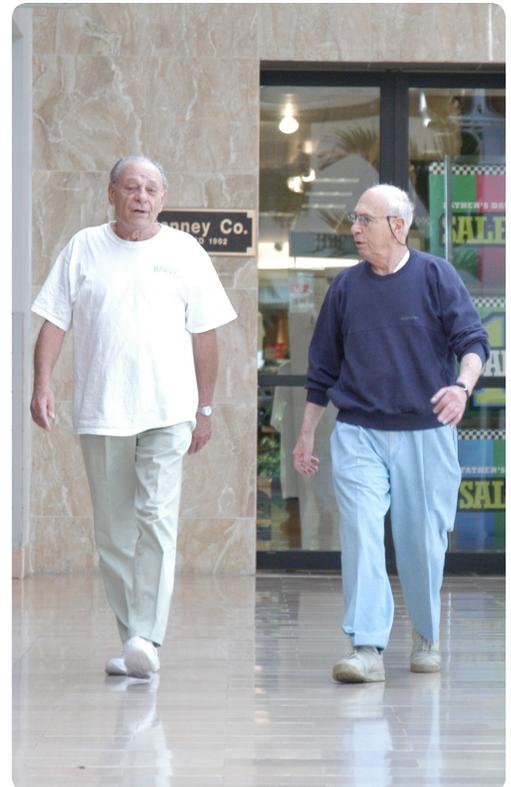
Quick Tip

For a complete workout, combine mall walking with the strength, balance, and flexibility exercises found in *Workout to Go*.

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- See sample *Go4Life* exercises.
- Find other walking resources.



Mall Walking (continued)

Marty found that walking at the mall had unexpected benefits: “Every morning I head out to the mall—not to shop, but to join my mall-walkers group. At 75, I’m one of the youngest members. Some of us move at a steady clip, while others take a slower pace. We count our laps and keep a daily record of our progress—pushing ourselves to go a little faster, a little farther. At first, I walked because it was something to do each morning. But now, I realize that I like how it feels to be moving. Measuring how fast I can walk gives me goals, something to work toward. I walk and feel stronger every day.”

Ask if your local mall currently has a mall walking program. If not, check out *Mall Walking: A Program Resource Guide* (<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/mallwalking-guide.pdf>) from the University of Washington and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and see how easy it is to start one. Learn best practices from other mall walking programs, see how to work successfully with mall management, and more.

No mall nearby? To find other walking groups or programs in your area, check with a local community center, senior center, faith-based organization, worksite, or school. Many communities have public parks with outdoor walking trails, school tracks, or worksites with indoor or outdoor walking paths.



National Institute on Aging