



How to Get Started Walking

A Check List

Is taking walks and spending time outdoors in nature new for you? You are not alone! It's easy to get started and you don't need any special equipment or knowledge.

Here are 7 easy "How To" steps to help you unplug from your screens, get out of your chair and start walking on a trail. We bet, you'll love taking walks and spending time in nature in no time!

1. Decide when you are going to take a walk. Choose the day(s) and time(s) that fit into your schedule and add these to your calendar now.

- Do you want to walk a couple of days a week or on your weekend?
- Which day(s) of the week work best?
- What time of day is easiest? Before or after work/school or during lunch break?
 - Walking after work is a fun way to unwind and relax.
 - You may be able to get colleagues to join you for a walk during your lunch break.
 - Some people love to take a walk before going to work/school.
 - Many people find that the best time to go for a walk is during their weekend or other days off work/school.

2. Decide how much time you have for your walk. What is the simplest way to fit a short walk - between 20 and 45 minutes - into your day? You may want to take a longer walk on your weekend.

3. Decide where you are going to go. Choose a place and trail that is right for you.

- Select a trail that is easy to get to.
 - For most people the best trail is one that is close to home or where you work/go to school or on your way home from there.
 - For regular walks, choose a trail that you can walk in less than an hour. For weekends, you might select a longer trail for an outing to explore someplace new or special. Remember that walking on a trail takes a little longer than walking on a paved path or sidewalk.

- Does your trail need to be very easy footing, stroller or wheelchair friendly, or dog friendly?
- You may already know a place to walk. Talk to friends to learn their favorite places to take a walk. Ask them to show you their favorite trail.
- Make it fun! Especially for walks when you have more time, choose trails that have a special feature that attracts you, such as a beach, shoreline, stream, scenic view, interesting vegetation, historic site or other destination. Do you want to explore new places? Some people prefer to be adventurous and explore trails in other parts of the state.
- The [ExploreRI.org website](http://ExploreRI.org) can help you find a trail that is near where you live. ExploreRI lets you search for trails by:
 - location;
 - difficulty;
 - dog friendly; and
 - stroller friendly.

4. Consider taking someone with you! Invite a friend, take your kids or just take your dog for a walk.

- Would you prefer to walk alone so you can clear your head, have some peaceful time to relax or think? Or do you want to walk with others so that your walks are social time? Walking with others can add to the fun and help you to follow through with your plans to walk.
- Some people enjoy the peace and quiet of walking alone. They treasure the personal time and like to explore trails on their own.
- Other people love taking walks with their partners, family or friends.
- Walking is a great time to have a conversation with your kids, parents, partner, coworkers and friends.
- Joining a group for an organized walk is a great way to learn a new trail and can be a way to make new friends.
- Form or join a moms/dads group that regularly goes on walks together.

5. Preparing for your walk is easy.

- Once you select a trail send directions to the trail to your phone or print the directions and don't forget to print the trail map! (You can find these on ExploreRI.org for most trails in the state.)
- Wear clothing that is comfortable and matchesthe weather. It's best to wear layers so that you can take off or add a sweater or jacket to adjust to the temperature, wind and your energy level.
- Wear sturdy shoes such as athletic shoes, walking shoes or even hiking boots if you are going on a more challenging trail.
- Put on sun screen and bug repellent to protect yourself from sunburn, mosquitoes, ticks and other insects.

- Prevent tick bites by wearing long light-colored pants, tucking them into your socks. Inspect yourself and your kids to pick off any ticks after a walk.
- Take a water bottle and snacks, such as fruit, granola bars and trail mix.

6. Have fun on the trail.

- Look for good places to stop for a rest break and enjoy your surroundings.
- Sit and listen, breath fresh air, feel the breeze and watch and enjoy nature.
- Often, large rocks and the trunks of fallen trees create a great place to sit or a place to stop for a drink of water and snack. For longer walks find a good spot to sit and eat lunch.
- Create a challenge or decide on something you are looking for - download a scavenger hunt from this website and take it with you.
- Take photographs on your walk.

Source: <https://exploreri.org/riwalks/new.php>