



PO Box 312
Westminster, VT 05158
(802) 722-3607

Free “Medicine”

What reduces the risk of breast and colon cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and depression; improves your immune function and brain performance, makes you feel better, look better and live longer, and is free? WALKING

And it doesn't have bad side effects, interact with medications, or hurt (if you wear decent shoes).

Study after study results in the same conclusion, walk several times a week and you will be healthier and happier. That's the bottom line.

So why do people NOT walk? No time, too cold out, knee hurts, the excuses are endless. My suggestion? Decide now, this very moment, that you are going to walk three times a week for at least 30 minutes. Find a friend, or a dog, who is willing to walk with you. Set goals: today to the end of your driveway, tomorrow to the end of the road. Start slowly, your body will get used to walking longer and longer distances.

If you think you're too old to start walking, AARP has suggestions on their [website](#) to inspire you. Get a step-counter and attach it to your waistband when you get dressed each morning, and aim for 10,000 steps per day. If you don't like the cold, walk in a gym. Here are a few ideas:

- The Westminster Center School gym is open for walkers weekday mornings from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.
- Putney Central School opens to walkers each Tuesday and Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

But remember walking outdoors improves cognitive function. If you believe you don't have time, think very carefully about something you do that takes 30 minutes three times a week that you can replace with walking. If you have health issues, make an appointment with your doctor and tell her you want to walk for health and need help with your physical problems so you are able to walk.

Get motivated.

Walking is the simplest and most accessible thing you can do for your health and well-being, and it is highly unlikely that new research will come out that says, 'oops, never mind, we found out it's unhealthy to walk'.

Judi Petry, MD, Westminster Resident