

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's legs from the knees down, walking on a path covered in dry, brown pine needles. The person is wearing dark-colored athletic sneakers with bright pink accents on the laces and the midsole. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blur of warm, golden-yellow light, suggesting a sunny day in a forest or park. The overall mood is peaceful and active.

WALK INTO
Wellness

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Hi, I'm Birgitte — a holistic health practitioner for more than 20 years, and now the heart behind Hygge Homestead.

Through my work and writing, I've learned that true wellness comes from simple, steady practices — not quick fixes or chasing perfection.

That's why I created My Seven Steps:

*food, water, sleep, exercise, fresh air,
silence, and gratitude.*

These steps are the foundation for living with more balance and less stress, no matter where you are.

Over the years, I've seen how powerful small changes can be — a glass of clean water, a walk outside, a pause for gratitude — and how they often bring more lasting results than the biggest health trends.

My focus is on helping people reconnect with what really matters: nourishment, rhythm, and the joy of everyday life.

Today, I do my best to live out these steps in my own life, whether I'm tending the garden, working on projects alongside my husband, or cooking in my Homestead Kitchen and sharing simple, nourishing recipes.

For me, health is built one small choice at a time. My hope is to inspire you to slow down, breathe a little deeper, and discover that health and happiness often begin with the simplest everyday moments.

In This Guide, We'll Explore:

Importance of Breathing

Breathing Techniques

Why Hydration

Stretching Exercises

Posture While Walking

Choose the right Gear

12 Week Walking Schedule

Final Thoughts

Walk Into Wellness

Walking is one of the simplest yet most effective forms of exercise. Just putting one foot in front of the other can lower stress, lift your mood, and improve circulation.

Over time, walking helps strengthen your heart, muscles, and bones while also giving your mind the benefit of fresh air and gentle rhythm. Whether done alone for reflection or with a friend for connection, walking can become a daily anchor for both physical and emotional health.

This Quick Guide is designed for both beginners and advanced walkers, gradually increasing intensity while incorporating mindful breathing techniques, hydration, and stretching.



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An early-morning walk is a blessing
for the whole day.”

– Henry David Thoreau

Importance Of Correct Breathing

Breathing correctly is fundamental to overall health and well-being. It affects everything from energy levels and mental clarity to digestion and stress management.

Many people unconsciously engage in shallow, chest breathing, which limits oxygen intake and increases tension in the body. Proper breathing, which involves deep diaphragmatic breaths, helps optimize oxygen distribution, regulate the nervous system, and enhance focus and endurance.

Whether walking, sitting, or sleeping, conscious and efficient breathing supports better circulation, reduces inflammation, and fosters a greater sense of relaxation and balance in daily life.

Deep Belly Breathing

Breathing deeply into the stomach, rather than the chest, is essential for optimal oxygen intake and relaxation.

This is a great habit to incorporate as the first thing you do in the morning, and the last before you go to bed.

When you breathe correctly, your stomach expands as your diaphragm moves downward, allowing your lungs to fully inflate. Avoid lifting your shoulders when inhaling, as this creates shallow breathing and unnecessary tension.

Expanding the stomach instead of the chest enhances lung efficiency, lowers stress levels, and promotes better circulation.

This type of breathing engages the parasympathetic nervous system, helping to reduce anxiety and improve overall respiratory health.



Breathing Techniques

James Nestor, author of *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art*, explores various breathing techniques that enhance oxygen efficiency, endurance, and overall health.

Below are four key breathing methods he highlights:

4-4 Breathing (Rhythmic & Steady)

*Inhale 4 steps, exhale 4 steps through the nose.
Steady oxygen flow, calm rhythm, great for walking.*

Extended Exhale (Endurance Boost)

*Inhale 4 steps, exhale 6–8 steps.
Builds lung capacity and CO₂ tolerance for better stamina.*

Box Breathing (Focus & Calm)

*Inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4.
Sharpens focus and eases stress — used by Navy SEALs.*

Breath Holds (Advanced Oxygen Training)

*Exhale fully, hold 5–10 seconds, then resume.
Strengthens lungs, boosts oxygen efficiency, supports recovery.*

Overall Benefits

Better oxygen use • Stress relief • Mental clarity • More endurance •
Reduced inflammation • Nervous system balance

These techniques can be incorporated into daily routines, walking exercises, or stress-relief practices to enhance overall well-being.

Why Hydration

Water is vital for every function in the body, including breathing. Staying hydrated supports oxygen transport, lung function, and healthy mucus membranes, while dehydration can lead to fatigue, brain fog, and poor circulation.

A simple rule: drink about half your body weight in ounces daily (150 lbs = 75 oz). Needs vary with activity, climate, and health. For best absorption, choose room-temperature or warm water, which also supports circulation and detoxification.

Check out our [**Hydration Quick Guide**](#).

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Pure water is the world's
first and foremost medicine.
– Slovak Proverb



Hydration tips:

Start Your Day with Water:

Drinking a glass of water first thing in the morning helps rehydrate the body after sleep and jumpstarts metabolism.

Quality Matters:

Filtered water is best to avoid contaminants that can affect bodily functions and hydration levels.

Electrolyte Balance:

Adding a pinch of high-quality sea salt or natural electrolytes, especially in hot weather or when sweating a lot, can support hydration at a cellular level, preventing dehydration and improving oxygen delivery to tissues.

Listen to Your Body:

Thirst is a late sign of dehydration.

Staying consistently hydrated throughout the day helps maintain energy, supports digestion, and enhances the efficiency of deep breathing.



Sip, Don't Chug

Your body absorbs about 3.5 oz (100 ml) every 20 minutes.

Small sips hydrate better than big gulps,
which just send you to the bathroom.

Posture While Walking

Maintaining proper posture while walking improves balance, prevents strain on the joints, and enhances breathing efficiency.

Poor posture can lead to discomfort and fatigue, reducing the benefits of walking.

How to Maintain Good Walking Posture:

Keep your head up, eyes looking forward (not down), and chin parallel to the ground.

Relax your shoulders to prevent tension and avoid hunching.

Swing your arms naturally in rhythm with your stride, keeping elbows slightly bent.

Engage your core muscles to support your spine and maintain stability.

Walk with a natural step, avoiding over striding, which can lead to joint strain.

Strike the ground with your heel first and roll through to the toes for an efficient gait

Let's Go

This 12-week Walk Into Wellness Schedule helps you build consistency step by step, gradually working toward 45–60 minutes most days — right in line with expert recommendations.

- **CDC:** 150 minutes per week, about 30 minutes 5 days a week.
- **Harvard Health:** 21 minutes a day can lower heart disease risk by 30%.
- **Mayo Clinic:** 30–45 minutes most days for cardiovascular benefits..

General Notes

- **Beginners:** Focus on consistency and posture. Add minutes gradually.
- **Advanced:** Add inclines, faster intervals, or mindful breathing techniques.
- Always listen to your body. Walking is about progress, not perfection.

And remember - The best walk is the one you rascally take

Weeks 1-4: Building Consistency (Starting small and steady)

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
1	15 min	20 min	Rest	20 min	25 min	25 min	Rest
2	20 min	25 min	Rest	25 min	30 min	30 min	Rest
3	25 min	25 min	Rest	30 min	30 min	35 min	Rest
4	25 min	30 min	Rest	30 min	35 min	35 min	Rest

Weeks 5 - 8: Building Strength & Endurance

(Add 5-minute increments + optional intervals)

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
5	30 min	30 min	Rest	35 min	35 min	40 min	Rest
6	30 min	35 min	Rest	35 min	40 min	45 min	Rest
7	35 min	35 min	Rest	40 min	40 min	45 min	Rest
8	35 min	40 min	Rest	40 min	45 min	50 min	Rest



Fresh air and steady steps are medicine
you don't need a prescription for

Weeks 9 - 12: Building Confidence & Variety

(Introduce hills, varied speed, mindful breathing)

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
9	40 min	40 min	Rest	45 min	45 min	50 min	Rest
10	40 min	45 min	Rest	45 min	50 min	55 min	Rest
11	45 min	45 min	Rest	50 min	50 min	55 min	Rest
12	45 min	50 min	Rest	50 min	55 min	60 min	Rest

Final Thoughts

Walking doesn't have to be complicated to be powerful. Step by step, you're building strength, balance, and better health — and with it comes fresh air, a calmer mind, and moments of gratitude.

Remember, this schedule is a guide, not a rulebook. Some days you may walk less, some days more — it all counts. The goal isn't perfection, it's consistency and presence.

So put on comfortable shoes, dress for the weather, and step outside. Whether you walk alone, with your dog, or side by side with family, each walk is an investment in your well-being.



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Walking outdoors has been shown to lower stress hormones within just 20 minutes, helping you feel calmer, clearer, and more balanced for the rest of the day.

Your next step toward simple,
no stress, and seasonal living...

"Thanks for reading! I've gathered extra tips, recipes,
and seasonal living guides for you on my website.

Scan to explore them anytime."



LET'S STAY CONNECTED



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THE

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WHERE EVERY SEASON FEELS LIKE HOME