

Walking for Health — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Walking for Health course and gives you structured exercises, worksheets, and checklists to translate the evidence into a personalised walking practice. Work through each section alongside its matching module to build your program incrementally. Every template and planner here is designed to be completed with your own numbers, routes, and schedule.

The Science Behind Walking as Medicine

Establish your personal baseline step count and understand how the dose-response evidence applies to your current activity level.

Exercise: 7-Day Step Audit

Carry your phone or wear your device for 7 consecutive days without changing your behaviour. Record the step count each evening. Do not try to inflate numbers — honest baseline data is the foundation of your program.

- What is your daily step average across all 7 days?

- What was your lowest single-day count, and what was happening that day?

- What was your highest single-day count, and what enabled that?

- Based on the dose-response curve in Lesson 1, which risk tier does your current average put you in — and what is the step increment to reach the next tier?

Worksheet: Personal Step Baseline Worksheet

Fill in each field using your 7-day audit data. Use these figures to calculate your first 4-week step target.

Day 1 step count

Day 2 step count

Day 3 step count

Day 4 step count

Day 5 step count

Day 6 step count

Day 7 step count

7-day average (calculate manually)

Minimum single-day count (floor)

Maximum single-day count (ceiling)

First 4-week target (average + 1,500)

Approximate additional walking time needed per day (minutes)

Checklist: Metabolic Walking Quick-Wins Checklist

- Take a 2–5 minute walk within 60–90 minutes of at least one meal today
- Identify the highest-glycaemic meal in your day and schedule a post-meal walk after it
- Walk for at least 20 continuous minutes in a session to maximise fat oxidation
- Keep pace at conversational effort (full sentences, slightly elevated breathing) during fat-burn walks
- Record how you feel (energy, mood, hunger) after a post-meal walk vs. sitting — note the difference

Intensity, Pace, and Training Zones

Calculate your personal heart rate zones and design your first interval walk session using measured intensity targets.

Worksheet: Heart Rate Zone Calculator Worksheet

Use the Tanaka formula to calculate your HRmax and derive Zone 2 and Zone 3 targets. Carry these numbers on your phone or written on a card during walks.

Age (years)

HRmax estimate: $208 \text{ minus } (0.7 \times \text{age})$ — calculate and enter result

Zone 1 lower bound ($\text{HRmax} \times 0.50$) — calculate and enter

Zone 1 upper bound ($\text{HRmax} \times 0.60$) — calculate and enter

Zone 2 lower bound ($\text{HRmax} \times 0.60$) — calculate and enter

Zone 2 upper bound ($\text{HRmax} \times 0.70$) — calculate and enter

Zone 3 lower bound ($\text{HRmax} \times 0.70$) — calculate and enter

Zone 3 upper bound ($\text{HRmax} \times 0.80$) — calculate and enter

Wearable or app used to track HR during walks

RPE that corresponds to your Zone 2 (test during a walk and record)

Exercise: Cadence Calibration Drill

During your next walk, stop and count your steps for 15 seconds at three different paces: easy, brisk, and maximum comfortable. Multiply each count by 4 to get steps per minute. Record and compare against the 100 spm moderate-intensity benchmark.

- What is your easy-pace cadence (steps per minute)?

 - What is your brisk-pace cadence (steps per minute)?

 - At brisk pace, are you hitting 100 steps per minute? If not, what pace adjustment brings you there?

 - How many beats per minute did your HR rise between easy and brisk pace? Was it within your Zone 2 target range?
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Checklist: Interval Walk Session Prep Checklist

- Calculate and write down your Zone 2 and Zone 3 HR targets before your first interval session
- Plan a 25–35 minute route with enough space for 3–4 brisk intervals of 2–3 minutes each
- Set your phone or watch to display heart rate in real time
- Warm up for 5 minutes at easy pace before the first brisk interval
- Cool down for 5 minutes at leisurely pace after the final interval
- Log interval count, average HR during brisk intervals, and overall RPE after the session

Terrain, Environment, and Walking Variation

Map your local terrain options and design a weekly surface rotation that adds metabolic variety and proprioceptive challenge to your walks.

Exercise: Local Terrain Mapping Exercise

Spend 10 minutes mapping the surfaces and inclines available within a 20-minute drive or walk of your home. Use Google Maps satellite view to identify parks, trails, hills, staircases, and waterfront paths. Rate each for ease of access, surface type, and approximate incline.

- List 3 flat pavement routes suitable for step accumulation and cadence work.

 - List 1–2 inclined routes or treadmill options you can access for incline training sessions.

 - List 1 natural or trail surface option for proprioceptive variety and mental health benefit.

 - Which of these can you add to your routine this week without changing your schedule significantly?
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Worksheet: Weekly Surface Rotation Plan

Fill in your planned walking surface for each day of the week. Aim for a mix of pavement, incline, and at least one trail or natural surface per week.

Monday — surface type and intended route

Tuesday — surface type and intended route

Wednesday — surface type and intended route

Thursday — surface type and intended route

Friday — surface type and intended route

Saturday — surface type and intended route

Sunday — surface type and intended route

Number of incline days planned this week

Number of trail or natural surface days planned this week

Weather backup plan (treadmill location or covered route)

Checklist: Nature Walk Mental Health Protocol Checklist

- Schedule at least one 30–60 minute walk in a park or green space this week
- Leave earphones out for at least 15 minutes — observe sounds, textures, and smells in the environment
- Walk without checking your phone for the first 10 minutes to allow attentional restoration
- Note your mood and rumination level before and after the nature walk on a 1–10 scale
- Identify one nature route you could make a weekly ritual rather than an occasional treat

Building a Sustainable Long-Term Walking Practice

Design your injury-prevention checklist, 12-week progressive program, and habit architecture to make walking permanent.

Exercise: Footwear and Gait Self-Assessment

Inspect your current walking shoes and perform the gait check described below. This exercise takes 15 minutes and can prevent weeks of downtime from preventable injury.

- Examine the wear pattern on the sole of your current walking shoes — is the heel worn evenly, or significantly more on the outer or inner edge? What does this tell you about your foot strike?
- Estimate the age of your shoes in kilometres walked — are they past the 600–800 km replacement interval?
- Walk 50 steps normally, then review: do your feet land under your hips or ahead of them? Do your shoulders round forward?
- Identify one gait correction from the lesson (head position, arm swing, stride length, push-off) you will focus on during your next walk.

Worksheet: 12-Week Walking Progression Planner

Fill in your planned daily step target for each 2-week block. Mark deload weeks clearly. Use the shaded rows to record your actual average at the end of each block.

Week 1–2 target steps/day

Week 1–2 actual average steps/day

Week 3–4 target steps/day

Week 3–4 actual average steps/day (deload week at week 4 — note reduced target)

Week 5–6 target steps/day

Week 5–6 actual average steps/day

Week 7–8 target steps/day

Week 7–8 actual average steps/day (deload week at week 8)

Week 9–10 target steps/day

Week 9–10 actual average steps/day

Week 11–12 target steps/day

Week 11–12 actual average steps/day (deload week at week 12)

12-week outcome: did you reach your target step goal? (yes/no)

12-week cardiovascular change: resting HR at week 1 vs. week 12

Checklist: Habit Architecture Setup Checklist

- Write one implementation intention for your primary walking window (exact if-then statement — day, time, trigger)
- Identify one existing daily habit to stack your walk onto (morning coffee, commute, lunch break, after-dinner meal)
- Place your walking shoes in a visible, immediately accessible location
- Pre-load a walk-only podcast, audiobook, or playlist reserved strictly for walking
- Identify and remove one friction point that has caused you to skip walks in the past
- Set a minimum viable walk (10 minutes counts) so that busy days do not break the streak
- Schedule a weekly 5-minute review to check actual vs. planned steps and adjust the following week

Your Action Plan

1. Complete a 7-day step audit using your phone or wearable without changing behaviour — record daily totals
2. Calculate your HRmax using the Tanaka formula and write down your Zone 2 and Zone 3 target heart rates
3. Set your first 4-week step target at your 7-day average plus 1,500 steps per day
4. Walk for 2–5 minutes within 90 minutes of at least one meal per day to blunt postprandial glucose spikes
5. Complete the cadence calibration drill on your next walk — aim to reach 100 steps per minute during brisk intervals
6. Design your first interval walk session using the 5-minute warm-up, 2-minute brisk, 3-minute

easy, 3-set protocol

7. Map your local terrain options and build a weekly rotation: 2–3 pavement days, 1–2 incline days, 1 trail or nature day
8. Inspect your current footwear — if worn past 600–800 km, schedule a replacement
9. Write one implementation intention anchoring your daily walk to an existing routine
10. Plan deload weeks at weeks 4, 8, and 12 — reduce volume by 20–30% and eliminate intervals that week

