

# Newsletter

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## Exercise Breakthrough:

### Scientists discover the best way to stride off pounds without dieting

By: Alyssa Shaffer, Prevention (April 2009)

Pop Quiz: Two women go for a walk. One finishes quickly, the other takes her time. They each burn about 400 calories. So who sheds more bellyfat?

The obvious answer: it's a tie. But a surprising new study shows that the fast walker actually loses more. Researchers from the University of Virginia found that women who did three shorter, fast-paced walks a week (plus two longer, moderate-paced ones) **lost 5 times more abdominal fat** than those who simply strolled at a moderate speed 5 days a week, even though both groups burned exactly the same number of calories (400) per workout. The speedsters also dropped more than 2 inches from their waistlines, paired about 3 times more fat from their thighs, shed 4 times more body fat, and lost almost 8 pounds over 16 weeks – all without dieting!

The improvement didn't stop there. The high-intensity exercisers **lost about 3 times more visceral fat** - the dangerous belly fat that wraps around organs such as the liver and kidneys and has been linked to diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. 'Vigorous exercise raises levels of fat-burning hormones,' says lead researcher Arthur Weltman, PhD, director of the exercise psychology laboratory at the university. It also increases after-burn (the number of calories your body uses post-exercise as it recovers) by about 47% compared with lower-intensity workouts.

#### The 8-Week Plan

*YOUR GOAL:* walk 5 days a week, burning 400 calories each session:

- 3 days a week: do a high-intensity **Speed Walk**;
- 2 days a week: do a lower-intensity **Basic Walk**; and
- add belly fat **Sculpting Moves** to firm your ever-shrinking middle on any 3 nonconsecutive days of the week, working up to 2 sets by week 4.

**GETTING STARTED:** **to determine how long you need to walk** to melt 400 calories, find your weight and walking speeds on the chart below. The point at which they meet is your workout length. Note: the faster you walk or the heavier you are, the shorter your sessions will be, because you'll burn calories slightly faster.

WEIGHT	SPEED			
	3 MPH	3.5 MPH	4 MPH	4.5 MPH
140 lb	1 hr, 55 min	1 hr, 39 min	1 hr, 15 min	59 min
150	1 hr, 47 min	1 hr, 33 min	1 hr, 11 min	56 min
160	1 hr, 40 min	1 hr, 27 min	1 hr, 6 min	52 min
170	1 hr, 34 min	1 hr, 22 min	1 hr, 2 min	49 min

180	1 hr, 29 min	1 hr, 17 min	59 min	46 min
190	1 hr, 25 min	1 hr, 13 min	56 min	44 min
200	1 hr, 20 min	1 hr, 9 min	53 min	42 min
210	1 hr, 16 min	1 hr, 6 min	51 min	40 min
220	1 hr, 13 min	1 hr, 3 min	48 min	38 min

To estimate your speed, time how quickly you can cover a mile\* at both a Speed Walk pace (you can say a few words at a time but are mostly breathless) and a Basic Walk pace (you can talk but are slightly breathless).

Based on your times, here is how fast you are walking:

- 20 minutes = 3 MPH
- 17 minutes = 3.5 MPH
- 15 minutes = 4 MPH
- 13.5 minutes = 4.5 MPH

Retest about every 2 weeks because you will be able to walk faster as your fitness level improves.

### **The WALKS (5 times per week)**

#### ***SPEED WALK***

**3 TIMES PER WEEK** For this routine, you want to push yourself. Try to go at a pace at which you are breathing heavily, but you can speak a couple of words at a time (back off if you can't). Able to discuss dinner plans in detail? Go faster. Remember, everyone's idea of hard is different – for a beginner, 3 MPH may be plenty, while someone who is very fit may need to push it to 4.5 MPH or more to get results.

To help you get up to speed, take short breaks by slowing to a moderate pace. As you progress, do this recovery less frequently until you are able to keep up the pace for the full hour or more.

Take a 1-minute break (i.e., a moderate pace):

Week 1: every 5 minutes

Week 2: every 10 minutes

Week 3: every 15 minutes

Week 4: after 20 minutes, repeat if needed

Week 5: after 30 minutes, repeat if needed

Week 6: after 40 minutes, repeat if needed

Week 7: after 50 minutes

Week 8: walk for 60 minutes (or duration of workout) at a high intensity, without taking a break.

**BASIC WALK**

**2 TIMES PER WEEK.** Walk at a moderate (somewhat challenging) pace. Because you will be going slower, you will have to walk a little longer than you do in the Speed Workout in order to burn 400 calories. See the speed chart above to determine how long you need. Can't spare that much time all at once? You can divide your workouts into smaller chunks, such as three 20 – 30 minute sessions, and still get the same results according to University of Virginia researcher Arthur Weltman, PhD.

*For all walks go at an easy pace for 3 to 5 minutes to warm up and cool down.*