

## Slí na Sláinte

The Slí na Sláinte (Path to Health) Programme is a health promotion initiative of Irish Heart Foundation which aims to encourage people of all ages and abilities to walk for health and leisure.



## Community Walking Leader Training

Walking Leader Training is primarily aimed at people wishing to lead a walking group or promote walking in the community or workplace. The course comprises of a weekend of training and a 4 week leader task to try out your new walking leader skills.

Participants will gain a greater understanding of the health benefits of walking. They will learn to develop and lead a local walking session for mixed fitness levels; receive advice on starting a new walking group; and gain a greater understanding of posture, technique, stretching and safety issues to ensure a successful walk.

## Get into Walking Workshop

The Get into Walking Workshop aims to help the individual get the maximum health benefits from their walk, covering topics such as posture, technique and intensity.

## Slí na Sláinte routes

There are over 400 Slí na Sláinte routes in towns, villages, GAA clubs, workplaces and schools countrywide. The Slí routes are typically 2km-5km in length and use solid terrain (footpaths, roads etc). The routes are signposted with map boards, kilometre markers and directional arrows allowing people to keep track of the distance they walk.

## Walking Tips

- Begin your walk with some mobilising exercises followed by a period of gentle strolling.
- Relax your arms, allowing them to swing freely by your side.
- Maintain good posture by keeping your back straight and stomach pulled in.
- Increase the pace; feel your heart beat a little faster, your breathing become a little deeper and notice a slight increase in body temperature.
- Towards the end of your walk, cool down by strolling at a slower pace and perform some stretching exercises to help prevent stiffness.
- Drink water before, during and after a walk to prevent dehydration.
- Try to incorporate regular walking into your lifestyle, walk during your lunch break, take the stairs rather than the lift or get off the bus a few stops early.
- Walk with family, friends, neighbours or join a walking group to keep motivated.

**Irish Heart Foundation**  
Phone: +353 1 668 5001  
Email: [info@irishheart.ie](mailto:info@irishheart.ie)



**Heart and Stroke Helpline:**  
Freephone 1800 25 25 50  
Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Thur until 7pm

[www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)

If you would like to sign up to our newsletter please contact [info@irishheart.ie](mailto:info@irishheart.ie)



**Walk for  
Heart**





**We are the nation's heart and stroke charity. Our mission is to affect positive change in the lifestyles of Irish people, to achieve better outcomes for those affected by heart disease and stroke and to challenge when the health of our nation is put at risk. We empower people to live longer, healthier lives.**



## Walking for Health

Walking is a near perfect form of exercise particularly for those who are currently inactive. It is accessible to all regardless of age or ability; it's free, family-friendly, has a low injury risk and can be incorporated into people's daily lives.

Most importantly, walking is great for your health. When you walk at a moderate intensity you give your heart, lungs and blood vessels their own special workout, training these vital organs to work harder and more efficiently for you. As a result you can help reduce your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.

Walking also helps to reduce stress, tones your muscles, increases joint mobility, boosts your energy levels and helps you manage your weight.

## How much? How often?

In order to meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines and reap the health benefits from your walk, adults including older people should engage in...

At least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on 5 days a week or accumulate 150 minutes a week.

### 30 minutes a day

Work towards establishing a regular pattern of activity until you are active for at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week.

### Moderate intensity

Walking at a moderate intensity causes a slight but noticeable increase in heart rate and breathing and may cause light sweating.

### Accumulate

Means you don't have to do all your activity at once. Short bouts done regularly throughout the day are quite effective - bouts of more than 10 minutes are best.

## Weight Loss

Walking can be an effective way to aid weight loss combined with a healthy diet. To lose weight you need to do at least 60-75 minutes of moderate intensity walking every day. If you are extremely inactive then start with bouts of 10 minutes and gradually increase the duration and intensity of your walk.

## Getting Fitter

If you are already achieving the National Physical Activity Guidelines of 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on 5 days of the week you can continue to increase the duration and intensity of your walk. Aim to achieve the milestone of 60 minutes of moderate intensity walking on 5 days of the week.



## Walking Challenges

**Looking for some motivation to get out walking? Why not take on an Irish Heart Foundation Walking Challenge?**

### Slí Time or Distance Challenge

The Slí Time or Distance Challenge is a great way to motivate yourself or your walking group. Record either the number of minutes (time) or the distance you have walked. Accumulate 100km or 1,000 minutes and a silver Slí pin is your reward, record 500km or 5,000 minutes and you will receive the gold Slí pin. Just send in your completed challenge card and we will send out your pin. It's that simple - just get walking!

### Walk or Step Challenge

The Walk Challenge encourages participants to build up to the recommended 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity five days a week. You will receive a walking diary card to record your minutes of activity and a certificate of achievement on completion of the challenge.

The Step Challenge encourages you to achieve and maintain the target of 10,000 steps per day using a step counter. Participants receive a diary card to record their steps and a certificate of achievement on completion. The pedometer motivates participants to be more active and allows instant feedback on your activity level.

## Walking Gear

Walking does not require hi-tech, expensive equipment. To start, all you need is a good pair of walking shoes. Remember to wear loose light layers to help you move freely, removing items as you warm-up.