

WALKING YOUR STEPS TO HEALTH

Walking

YOUR STEPS TO
HEALTH



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CHAPTER 1

13 WAYS WALKING CAN BENEFIT YOU

There isn't even enough space here to include all the benefits of walking. Walking is simple to do, most healthy people can do it even if it might seem hard at first, and you can do it almost anywhere at any time. The only special equipment you need are good walking shoes, and then you're in business.

1. Burns More Calories – Walking burns calories like any other exercise, but without the impact and stress that other forms of exercise can like jogging and running. Even if you're not feeling well, you can go on a leisurely stroll and still get the benefits of the movement.

2. Builds a Strong Heart – Working out always helps your heart because you cause your cardiovascular system to work a little harder, which is good for it when you're healthy. Keeping your heart strong will keep you alive much longer.

3. Builds Better Bone Health – As we age, our bones become more brittle and we experience more pain. This can lead to broken bones and other issues. But if you keep walking and moving, you'll be less likely to develop those problems.

4. Improves Balance and Coordination – The more you use your body, the more it works for you. Walking more often improves your balance and coordination because your body gets used to standing upright and moving more often. It's a matter of practice and getting the muscles and ligaments strong.

5. Improves Your Lung Capacity – Walking, especially fast walking, will get your breathing up and cause you to build your lung capacity. Usually it takes about six to eight weeks of cardiovascular workouts to see the full improvement that you can experience.

6. Lower Your Blood Sugar – People with high blood sugar can see huge benefits from walking and burning off that extra sugar in their blood. It's not a cure for type 1 diabetes but it can help people with type 2 tremendously, and it can help people with type 1 lower their insulin requirements.

7. Eases Joint Pain – As people age, they tend to get joint pain, often caused by arthritis. It might seem counter-intuitive to keep moving through that pain, but pain from arthritis absolutely can be reduced from more movement. This is because arthritis causes build-up of scar tissue in the joints from lack of movement, so if you move more it can stop that problem.

8. Boosts Your Immunity – Getting your blood pumping and your cardiovascular system working will also boost your immunity from regular common illnesses like colds.

9. Energizes You – Anytime you're feeling tired for no reason, try going on a fast, ten-minute walk and you'll find that you have much more energy. This is one reason a fast walk is an excellent way to wake up in the morning.

10. Improves Your Mental Health and Mood – A nice walk in nature can vastly improve your mental health and mood. If you are feeling down, getting out in nature for a leisurely walk can help. If you're feeling anxious, try a fast walk (even on a treadmill) to burn that extra energy.

11. Helps You Live Longer and Healthier – When you incorporate daily exercise into your life, it will extend your life. Not only that, you'll also enjoy your life much longer because you won't be as sick or in as much pain.

12. Strengthens and Tone Your Leg Muscles – There is no hiding the fact that walkers have good legs, but it does also improve muscle tone all over your body - especially if you work on getting your arms in on the action and pay close attention to your glutes and core muscles.

13. Boosts Your Creativity – Anytime you're having a glut of good ideas for anything you're trying to accomplish, going for a walk without technology, just you and nature (or just you and the treadmill), you'll get a boost of creativity that will carry you through.

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Walking is something almost anyone can do. Because of that fact, it makes it the perfect exercise to start if you want to get healthier and improve your life in every single way. When are you going to start your walking program?

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SHOES

One of the things you need to consider if you want to start a walking program for yourself is your footwear. Finding the right shoe for walking is essential because if you have foot pain or problems with your feet, it can cause problems with the rest of your body too - from your legs to your knees to your back and more.

Buy a Walking Shoe

If you're going to use the shoes for walking, you should buy a walking shoe. Walking shoes are typically lightweight, allow for ventilation to prevent moisture, have outsoles that provide traction, plus they offer the right type of arch support.

You Don't Have to Buy Expensive Shoes

You really don't have to buy an expensive walking shoe to protect your feet. You only need to make sure it has the right walking shoe features such as those mentioned above. Look for shoe sales in January and April to get the best deals on walking shoes.

Think About How Your Foot Is Shaped

Everyone is different, so once you start looking at walking shoes you want to figure out what type of foot you have. How wide is your foot? How long is your foot? Do you have a big arch or a small arch? Different walking shoes will fit different criteria.

Ensure That the Shoe Fits

When it comes to walking shoes, you don't need to "break them in." They should feel comfortable from the moment you put them on. When trying on the shoes, be sure to wear the type of socks you plan to wear while walking to ensure that they fit the same. Also, try shopping for shoes after you have been walking so that your feet are at their largest size. Get your feet measured too, because you may be wearing the wrong size out of habit.

Don't Wear Old Shoes

You really do need to buy new shoes more often than you might think. A good walking shoe will last about 400 miles of use, but you can also choose to get rid of them when the outsole is worn (as a guide). The best thing though is to check your mileage, just like you would for your car tires. If the outsole is not in good shape, it can cause a considerable impact on the rest of your body due to not giving you enough traction or cushion for your steps.

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Wearing the right walking shoes will prevent issues such as blisters, as well as body pain that can be caused by the shock of your foot hitting the pavement. That's why a walking shoe is lighter, has good shock absorption due to the way the outsole is made, and good materials inside to cushion the impact of hitting the ground with each step. Your feet will thank you, and your entire body will thank you too.

CHAPTER 3

TIPS TO SMART WALKING

The main thing to remember, no matter what you're setting a goal for, is that your goals should be SMART. That means they need to be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. If you make a habit of creating goals for all aspects of your life using this acronym, you'll be a lot more successful - no matter what you do.

But before you get started with your SMART walking goals, let's talk about some factors to consider as you're creating your goals.

1) Know Your Fitness Level – Almost everyone can walk. This includes people who are very unhealthy, even if they can only walk for five minutes. Start with your fitness level and set your goals accordingly.

2) Know What You're Working Toward – Pretend you stuck to everything you are supposed to on this journey; what is the dream goal you're working toward? Even if it seems crazy, knowing that final goal is essential for designing your plans.

3) Know Your Time Availability – This is part of being realistic because if you have roadblocks to having enough time to devote to walking for health to meet your goals, you may not succeed.

Creating SMART Walking Goals

Here is an example of a healthy yet sedentary office worker for you to follow:

* **Specific** – My goal is to walk a minimum of 10,000 steps per day by the end of six months, starting where I am now at 1000 steps per day.

* **Measurable** – Every day, I will add 100 steps to my total. It will take me 90 days to reach 10,000 steps per day.

* **Attainable** – I am overweight but with no health problems, so my goal to walk 10,000 steps a day by the end of 90 days and to maintain it for 6 months is entirely doable in terms of my health.

* **Realistic** – Adding in 100 steps a day is realistic because I am healthy, and I have enough time. It'll take me about an hour and a half at my walking pace to reach 10,000 steps. I plan to walk each morning between 7 and 9 am. I also have an indoor place I can walk when the weather is terrible.

* **Timely** – By adding the goal of reaching 10,000 steps in 90 days, then maintaining that for six months, it makes the goal timely - meaning it has a time limit that you have set for you to reach your goal.

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As you see, crafting SMART walking goals will help you set up a plan that is achievable if you simply follow it. Once you have set the plan up, you can put it in your calendar, tell your accountability partner, and then just follow it. You will reach your goal without issue.

CHAPTER 4

6 WAYS YOU CAN TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

When you are truly committed to something, the best way to succeed is by making goals and then measuring and tracking your progress toward reaching those goals. Most life coaches love the saying, "If you fail to plan, you're planning to fail." And, whether you like it or not, that's the truth. If you want to succeed in your walking plans to improve your health goals, then track your progress.

Let's look at some different ways that you can track your walking progress.

*** Buy a Pedometer** – There are many different types of pedometers out there. You can get one for about ten bucks nowadays. A pedometer counts your steps for you so that you can simply wear it all day or when you are exercising to ensure you are getting as far as you want to get each day.

*** Write in Your Calendar / Planner** – A low-tech way (unless you use an online calendar) is to simply write down in your calendar how far you walked each day. That way you can ensure you're hitting your daily goals, which will also ensure you reach your long-term goals. Even if you are using an electronic means of tracking, sometimes it's more motivating to see your calendar filled with walking data.

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*** Join an Accountability Group** – On Facebook and other social media platforms, there are numerous support and accountability groups for walkers that you can join. You can tell the group your goals and sometimes find a mentor that will hold you accountable in your walking goals.

*** Get a Fun Tracker Like Fitbit** – Fitbit.com offers not only an app that is essentially a pedometer, but also more features such as joining with others to track your walking, sharing your walking, and meeting up with others who love walking.

*** Get Fun Personal Training Software** – Need even more motivation to track your progress? A fun app that can help you stay motivated is called Endomondo. You can sign up for free, and it's like having a personal trainer in your pocket each day while you're also keeping track of your progress.

Link - <https://www.endomondo.com/>

*** MapMyWalk** – This is an app that tracks your walking progress. However, it's even more than that because you can find walking trails in cities across the world that you might want to try. Plus, you can keep track of your time and distance with the app.

Link - <https://www.mapmywalk.com/app/>

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Tracking walking progress is essential to ensuring your success with walking for health issues. The only real way to be sure you are doing what you have set as your goal is to double-check your progress using any of these methods. If you write it down and look at it regularly, it will motivate you to do more.

CHAPTER 5

6 TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN POWER WALKING

Speed walking, power walking, race walking... These are terms that describe walking very fast without running or going into a jog. The main reason for speed walking over running and jogging is the damage that running can do to your body. Speed walking is a low-impact way of exercising that enables you to get more out of your walking workout.

Here are tips to follow if you are a beginner to make sure you get the most out of this type of walking.

*** Stay Hydrated** – Start your walk hydrated and then drink small amounts throughout your course. Don't over hydrate yourself by drinking too much, but keep a keen eye on the amount of fluid you are ingesting to ensure your body stays optimally hydrated.

*** Your Posture Is Everything** – When you are speed walking, it's imperative to keep your posture correct. If anything hurts, you may be doing it wrong. It can help to have someone checking in with you. Your spine should be straight, you should not be leaning forward or backward, and you should look straight ahead (not down). Keep your chin up so that you can reduce pain on your neck and back.

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* **Keep Your Form** – The way to walk when you are speed walking is different from your standard walking form. You need to relax your shoulders, keep your spine neutral, and keep your core tight. Ensure that you take natural strides that cause you to roll from your heel to your toe, giving you lift from your toes. When you want to go faster, don't make your strides longer - just quicker.

* **Wear the Right Shoes** – You still need walking shoes that fit you well. It can help to go to a real shoe place to get fitted correctly with the right type of walking shoe. You also need to replace them every 300 to 400 miles of walking to ensure proper protection.

* **Start Small and Add Daily** – Don't try to start speed walking 10,000 steps in one day. Instead, work your way up to it. You can add some speed walking into your daily walk for a minute or two at a time, working your way up until you are doing the entire course speed walking.

* **Find a Coach** – You need to mind your form so much that you probably should at least find a coach or someone who is an experienced power walker to demonstrate and then check how you do it so that you don't injure yourself. It is quite a challenge to learn the new form and way of walking.

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Because running is so hard on the body, with runners causing an impact on their limbs many times over their own body weight, speed walking and power walking can give you the same health benefits without the wear and tear and problems that running can cause.

CHAPTER 6

9 TIPS TO ENJOY WALKING

No matter how good something is for you, sometimes it can seem boring. Many people love walking but if you're having issues getting into it, consider these tips for making walking more fun.

1. Try New Walking Trails – Giving your eyes and mind more to see is a great way to make walking more fun. Try walking around a historical neighborhood, walking on a mountain trail, or following someone else's trail that they've documented through one of the walking apps.

2. Play a Game – Many people love playing games to walk. Organize a scavenger hunt and other activities that incorporate walking. That way, you can get others involved in the fun and get more steps in.

3. Pick Up Trash – One way to do good and walk more is to adopt an area that you pick up the trash in. This will slow your pace, but it's an excellent way to get in the steps you need while also doing something great for the environment. And if you're lucky, you live in a recycling area which might enable you to earn some cash by recycling aluminum and glass that you find.

4. Reward Yourself – Set up periodic rewards for yourself. For example, if you reach 50,000 steps before Friday during the week, set up a massage to reward yourself for reaching your goals.

5. Hunt for Treasure – Many people love geocaching. Basically, people are hiding things to see all over the world in places people like to walk or hike. Finding a treasure can make walking fun. To find out more, visit this site: <https://www.geocaching.com/play>

6. Take a Friend – Arrange friend dates for walking. Taking a new friend on each of your walks is a great way to catch up since you can talk while walking fast and getting in a workout.

7. Add Power Walking Intervals – It can really take your walk to the next level if you incorporate different styles of walking into your program. Try walking fast for one minute, then walking at your average pace for ten. If it's safe, drop and do some push-ups every ten minutes to make your walk more challenging.

8. Count Your Steps – Counting your steps using a pedometer is a great way to challenge yourself and to add fun to the walk. When you can compare your walking with others by using one of the apps like Fitbit.com and participating in their community, it can become more of a challenge and therefore more fun.

9. Track Your Progress – When you track your progress, it's fun to see the results. Take your weight and measurements before you start a new walking regimen. Periodically check up on your stats from the steps you took, to the trails you followed, to the way it's affecting your body.

If you are really having struggles, find a way to incorporate walking into your day that is more natural. For example, park far from the entrances, walk to the store instead of Ubering, and incorporate walking into every part of your life when you can instead of using modern conveniences.

CHAPTER 7

8 TIPS TO BRAVE THE WEATHER WHEN WALKING

The thing that often puts roadblocks in people's way when it comes to establishing a firm walking routine is the weather. These tips will help you navigate and plan for that happening – because it will happen. That way, nothing gets in your way. Remember, if you have a plan you can implement it.

It's Raining

When it's raining and wet outside, it's tempting to say you're not going to walk out there. Certainly, you don't have to - you can walk in a mall, at a gym, and in other indoor areas if you want to. However, walking in the rain isn't generally unsafe.

It's essential, like any other time, that you dress for the weather. If it's raining, wear rain gear for walkers so that you can still use your hands to protect yourself from a fall. You might be surprised that walking in a gentle rain when it's above 60 degrees F outside can be fun.

It's Snowing

One issue with snow is the cold and the potential for ice. Check the weather to ensure it's not too cold, and there are no warnings about dangerous cold. Even if it's at freezing doesn't mean you cannot walk if you have the right clothing and shoes on.

Take shorter, smaller steps to avoid slipping, and wear the right gear to protect you - including the correct type of shoes and outerwear to protect against wind and wetness in order to keep your body safe.

There's Ice Out There

One of the times you might want to consider skipping walking outside is if there is ice or there is a significant wind chill factor. If you do find yourself walking on ice, it's important to take smaller steps that are more like marching than walking normally. This will help you avoid slipping.

It's Hot as Heck

When it's hot outside, you can still walk. However, it is important to understand that there are times that it's best to stay out of the heat. The main thing about heat is to ensure you wear the right clothing as protection, are drinking enough water to stay hydrated, and that you protect your skin and head from the heat.

It's So Humid

Walking when it's humid will make it feel much hotter and less comfortable, but you can still do it. You may need to walk slower, drink more water, and take more breaks. Wear thin cotton clothing so that it helps wick away the moisture from your body so that you can avoid chafing and blisters on your feet. Consider taking a change or two of socks for a longer walk.

There Is No Humidity

While it's always more comfortable outside even in hot weather when there is low or little humidity (as in the desert), drinking enough water is even more important. You should wear clothing to cover your entire body and your head to keep cool, plus plan on taking at least a gallon of water with you for each hour you plan to walk. You need way more than the eight glasses a day in this type of climate; in fact, you may need up to 30 cups of water.

It's Cold Outside

If it's cold but not snowing or raining, walking is a good thing to do. If it's not too cold to be outside safely (look at your local weather information), you can walk like you usually do even if it's down as low as freezing if it's not too windy or bad weather. Dress appropriately and you'll be fine.

It's Just Not Safe Outside

If you have determined it's just not safe for you to walk outside, or you simply don't want to due to the bad weather, you don't have to. You can go to a gym with an indoor track, the local indoor mall, and other indoor areas to walk, including a treadmill in your home when needed.

Walking in inclement weather is not hard to do. You simply need to dress accordingly and take enough water with you to keep yourself hydrated and healthy. If it's too uncomfortable, you can do just as much walking inside if you prefer.

CHAPTER 8

11 WAYS YOU CAN INTRODUCE WALKING IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

Many people claim that the reason they cannot walk more is their busy schedule. However, the truth is, the things you make time for are the things that get done. By planning for roadblocks and developing a plan to overcome them, you can fit walking into your daily schedule seamlessly without much trouble. Just follow these tips.

*** Walk during Lunch** – You shouldn't miss your food break, but you can eat a sandwich or fruit and walk at the same time. If you have a flexible office, another alternative is to walk during lunch and eat at your desk while doing your work.

*** Only Watch TV while Moving** – If you like to watch TV, make a rule that you can only watch while moving. You can walk on a treadmill, or you can just march in place during the show. That is going to bring lots of extra walking into your life.

*** Listen to Audio Books** – If you like to read, instead of reading buy audiobooks, then make a rule for yourself (and even your kids) that you can only listen while walking and moving.

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*** Start Your Day Right** – Get up 30 minutes early so that you can work in a 20-minute speed walking session before your shower, coffee, and breakfast. By starting your day right, you'll be ahead of the game.

*** Walk Instead of Email at the Office** – If you work in an office building, you probably send a lot of emails back and forth. But if you know that the person you send the email to has to print the document, you can print it yourself and then walk it to them to get in those extra steps.

*** Park Your Car Further from Your Destination** – Always park as far from an entrance as you can and then walk to it. That is going to add a lot of steps, plus it's going to cut down on stress in parking lots. You're less likely to be involved in an accident if you park far from the crowd.

*** Get Off the Bus Early** – If you take public transport, don't get off at your stop but get off early in an area that is safe for you to grab 15 extra minutes of walking.

*** Walk to the Store** – Do you live near a minimarket or some sort of convenience store? Instead of grabbing the next carton of milk by driving to the store, just walk to your local store. Even though it cost more money there, the added benefit of walking and using less fuel makes up for it. Use a backpack to carry your groceries home safely.

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*** Keep Your Gear with You** – Keep a set of walking gear in your vehicles such as shoes, socks, and clothing, so that you can dress for walking any time you want to.

*** Add Walking to Your Daily Family Time** – Walking for 20 to 30 minutes after dinner used to be a time-honored tradition for families who lived in the suburbs in the days of wrap-around porches and close community connections. You can still do that with your kids and partner to add walking into your day while also spending time with the people you care about.

*** Avoid Sitting When Waiting** – If you must wait on people for appointments, instead of sitting, take the time to pace and walk. Even if you just march in place, it will make a difference.

Any bit of movement you can squeeze out of your day is beneficial to your health mentally, physically, and spiritually. You'll feel better about yourself the more you can walk, and it's going to show to others in your appearance and your health.

CHAPTER 9

9 FACTS ABOUT WEIGHT LOSS AND WALKING

According to the National Library of Medication from the National Institute of Health in the US, walking only after meals can be more effective than any other walk that you do. Because of this, it's clear that walking can enable you to lose more weight than if you only concern yourself with diet.

Calories in Calories Out

When it comes to any type of weight loss, the trick is to consume fewer calories than you expend. One way to be able to eat more while losing weight is to move more - thus using more calories. To lose a pound of body weight, you will need to have a deficit of 3,500 calories over what it takes your body to maintain its current weight. 3500 calories equals approximately one pound of body weight.

Try Power Walking in Intervals

Because you know that calories in and out make a huge difference, you can do the math to find out how much you should lose if you're also tracking your calories taken in and burned. When you add power walking (fast walking) in intervals to your average walking pace, you can increase your calorie burn.

Add Resistance Training to Your Walk

Some walking trails have some of these spots added in - if so, use them. Do squats, push-ups, burpees, triceps dips, and lunges periodically to add challenge and extra calories burned into the walking workout.

Always Walk for 20 to 30 Minutes Post Meals

In addition to your typical "exercise" walks, try walking right after your meals before you clean up or do anything else. On this walk, you can walk at a moderate to easy pace. The point here is to assist your body with digestion. If you tend to have tummy troubles after meals, skip this part.

Walk Briskly

When you walk from place to place, like your car to the store or the bus stop to your front door, don't drag along. Pick up the pace and walk briskly. You should be able to talk but not sing if you're walking fast enough.

Use Technology

There are numerous apps to help you not only get your form right but also track your progress, including the steps you make each day. Apps like Fitbit.com and others really help and motivate - not only due to the numbers on the app but also due to the community that has been created.

Add Some Weights

When your normal walk isn't feeling like it's working you out enough, and you're otherwise in top shape, try adding some weights to your walk. They make weighted vests for just such an occasion to help. You'll burn more calories with every move.

Go Uphill

Try finding trails that have hills occasionally. Walking uphill is harder on your body and will cause a more significant calorie burn. Plus, it's good for your entire cardiovascular system to get your heart pumping faster. Remember, if you burn an additional 3500 calories over what your body is using, you'll lose one pound in the course of a week. This can be accomplished by merely walking fast for 30 minutes per day if you plan your moves right and add weights if needed.

Keep Good Posture

Always maintain the right posture for walking. You should stand up straight. Your feet should be a comfortable width apart with your toes pointed forward. Do not arch your back, do engage your core muscles, and walk by rotating your hips forward with your buttocks. Keep your chin parallel to the ground, and your neck and shoulders relaxed. It helps if you focus on what is about 20 feet ahead of you, while also adding arm motions.

Finally, ensure that you are using the right stride. You should be hitting the ground with your heel, rolling through the step from heel to toe, and pushing off with your toes to get a faster pace. Don't pound the ground when you walk; focus on keeping the impact minimal while taking more rapid smaller steps.

CHAPTER 10

WALKING WITH A PURPOSE

One way to make walking not only healthy but also beneficial is to find charities to walk for. Basically, the way it works is you find the charity and set up the walk by asking your friends and family to donate to the charity based on the number of miles you walk. This type of walking gives you extra incentive to get in shape, stay in shape, and keep walking.

Use an App

A great app for this is called Charity Miles. Basically, you just download the free app, which is suitable for both Apple and Android operating systems. Set up your account and choose your charity. It will track your movements and report to the system. When you walk, it tracks it and sends the earnings to your charity of choice. You can find sponsors through the app as well as by asking friends, family, and small local businesses to sponsor you.

Link - <https://charitymiles.org/>

Seek Out the Charity

If you already know what charity you want to walk for but you don't want to use one of the apps, you can reach out to start your walking for a charity event by contacting them directly to work out the details. Some charities already have yearly walking events that you can join and sponsor in your local area. You can look for more charities at ACTIVE.

Link - <https://www.active.com/>

Set Your Goal

Set your walking goals based on how much money you want to make and how much buzz you want to create for the fundraiser. You can make it challenging or fun depending on the audience you want to attract. Some people prefer a leisurely walk with food and lots of talking, and others want a fast walking race.

Be Aware of Your Fitness Level

Before you start, you want to know about your fitness level. Can you walk for long periods without an issue? Even if you can only walk 30 minutes at a stretch, you can still raise money for your favorite charity, but knowing this level can help you set more realistic goals.

Train for Your Fundraiser

One way to ensure you meet your goals is to train for the fundraiser. If you want to walk a 50K for the fundraiser, you should work your way back from the date of the fundraiser and set up a training program that gets you to that goal when you're ready to do it. For example, you may want to add 100 to 1000 steps a day until you can make it.

Be Ready to Motivate Others

When you are doing a charity event (even if you're using the apps available to do it), you'll make more money for your organization if you motivate your sponsors and your team if you have one by training, ensuring you are prepped and ready, and having high spirits about your goals and what you're doing.

Don't forget that there are already yearly walks for many charities. You can find out more about walking for charity by approaching specific charities directly or using Charity Miles or ACTIVE mentioned in this article.