



# To Your HEALTH



WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

## Walk The Talk

Because most of us do it without thinking, we don't count walking when we tally our sources of daily physical activity, and many of us overlook walking when we look for ways to improve our health and fitness. Although it's easy to take for granted, people who have found themselves unable to walk recognize that walking is a critical aspect of individual freedom, independence, and self-determination.

You don't have to be a great athlete to enjoy the benefits of walking. You just have to do it. Olympic racewalker Debbi Lawrence gives this advice: Begin slowly. Start with a short loop of five to ten minutes, turn around and return. Gradually increase the distance as your fitness level improves. Relax. Enjoy the world that surrounds you. The following tips will help you maintain proper form and posture when you walk.

- ♥ *Use a powerful, low, and controlled arm swing for a more efficient stride.*
- ♥ *Carry your hands loosely, with palms facing inward and thumbs on top.*
- ♥ *Keep your thumb and elbow in line, parallel to your waistband to keep your shoulders low.*
- ♥ *Keep elbows bent at a 90° angle.*
- ♥ *As you walk, drive your elbow straight back until the wrist meets the hipbone. Then, as your elbow swings forward, stop slightly in front of the hip.*
- ♥ *Avoid any side-to-side motion. As you bring your leading arm forward, your opposite leading leg will also swing forward.*
- ♥ *If you want to increase your pace, take shorter, quicker steps.*

## WALKING For The Health of It

It's the simplest, most accessible form of exercise, and it may also be the best thing you can do each day to improve and maintain health and well-being throughout life. Following are just some of the many benefits of walking.

**Healthful.** Walking keeps every body tuned up. It stimulates your heartbeat, especially if you move at a brisk pace; it gets your muscles moving; it challenges you to stand up straight and coordinate your movements; it uses your body's own weight to help build and maintain bone density.

**Convenient.** A walk is always just one step in front of you, anytime, anywhere—indoors, outdoors, alone, with a friend or group (or dog), in the city, country, or beach; on flat or hilly terrain; rain or shine.

**Better Than A Diet.** Walking burns calories and fat while it tones and shapes muscles. Walking can also help you cut down on excessive eating, not only by boosting your metabolism and suppressing appetite (an effect observed by many avid walkers, runners, and other athletes), but also by getting you off the sofa and away from the refrigerator and microwave.

**Mood And Attitude Enhancer.** Walking helps you clear the cobwebs, shake the blues, recharge your batteries, cool off, and calm down. By taking you away from phones, problems, and daily clutter, walking can give you a chance to put things into perspective and come up with new ideas.

**Good Medicine.** Hospital professionals know that the sooner patients get up and walk, the sooner and more fully they will recover. Walking can help prevent or relieve many illnesses and injuries, including heart disease, arthritis, obesity, osteoporosis, falls, accidents, and fractures.

**Beauty Treatment.** In addition to helping control your weight and maintain muscle tone, walking can give your cheeks a rosy glow, your complexion a fresh, clear look; it can boost your posture, put bounce in your step, and grace in your stride.

**Long-Term Investment.** The many benefits of walking can accrue interest and dividends as the years go by. When other forms of exercise become too challenging, walking is still a good choice—even for people who must use canes or walkers.

**No Cost.** No special equipment or facilities are required. While you can go for special walking shoes and suit up in athletic wear, all you really need is comfortable footwear and clothing.

*Note:* If you're not feeling up to your full walk routine, choose a shorter route, rather than a longer hike that may prove too much.





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## Understanding Depression

### A Look at Different Kinds of Depression

By Fern Carness, MPH, RN

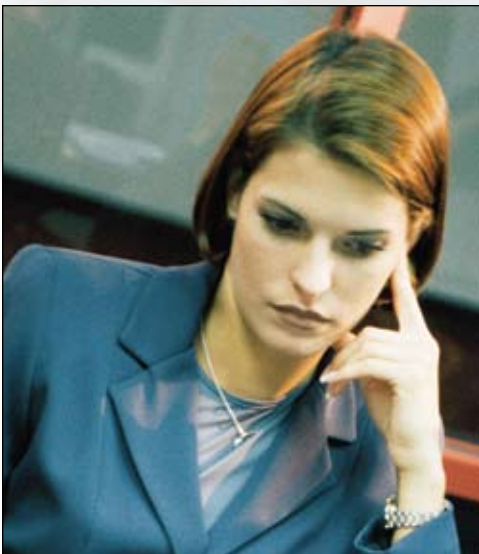
**A**re you sad? Many times women use the term “depressed” to mean a wide variety of mood states. This can be anything from a passing feeling of sadness to a serious medical condition of clinical depression. We all have “bad” days. Sometimes these moods are normal, necessary and manageable. For example, an episode of grief is a normal response to a major loss, or moodiness may accompany a period of high stress. Other times depression can lead to serious debilitation and even death.

#### The Facts

- 20 percent of women will experience a major depression in their lifetime
- Women are three times more likely to suffer from depression than men
- If you've been depressed, there is a 50 percent chance you'll be depressed again

#### Different Types Of Depression Found In Women

- **PPD:** Post-partum depression “The Baby Blues”
- **PDD:** Pre-menstrual Dysphoric Disorder, part of “PMS”
- **Dysthymia**-low grade chronic depression
- **SAD:** Seasonal Affective Disorder “Winter Blues”



If you are sad, irritable, low energy, with a sense of helplessness for an extended period of time, you may be depressed. Depression is also accompanied by a sense of negativity and a loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities.

While many women suffer from some form of depression, the good news is that treatment is available. Treatment for depression includes talk therapy and medication. Research shows that 80 percent of the women who seek help see improvement in their level of depression and can return to activities of daily living.

## Antidepressants For Women

According to Amy Niles, President and CEO of the National Women's Health Resource Center, “At every age, women should know that depression is a treatable condition and that there are effective ways to manage it so women are able to live normal, productive lives. We urge all women who are experiencing the symptoms of depression to reach out for the treatment they deserve.”

#### Types Of Treatment:

**Exercise:** Exercise raises serotonin levels in your body making the chemical changes to reduce depression.

**Psychotherapy:** Known as talk therapy, this is a way to work with a professional to sort out problems and identify solutions to a situation that may lead to depression.

**Medication:** New and better pharmaceutical products are available to help with managing moods and depression. Some may have an effect on appetite and libido. Talk to your doctor to find the combination that is right for you. To find more helpful information, take a look at the following websites.

[www.drdonnica.com](http://www.drdonnica.com)

[www.healthywomen.org](http://www.healthywomen.org)



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