

# Walk NEBRASKA

## Taking the Steps to Health as a Family

Trying to work in family time every day can be really frustrating, especially when you are feeling the pressure to exercise, get the house clean, and do all the other things that need to be done each day. One way to have some family time, reduce stress and exercise all at the same time is walking together. You'll also be giving one another focused time to talk, laugh and enjoy being together.

Plan a series of your own family-fitness walks. Take regular, brisk walks with your children around your community. Select a different destination each time, with the goal of passing by sites that are historic or a landmark that you want your children to know about.

Look for new places to explore, new places to see, or visit old favorite ones. Going to the library to pick out a new book, or walking to the grocery store together with the intent of each carrying a bag of groceries home will really help you get exercise in, and do some of those other daily chores.

One idea: Use colorful sidewalk chalk to write direction signs on your sidewalk to make it fun for walkers strolling by your home. Write the names of destinations with an arrow pointing north, south, east or west. That way they'll know which way to turn to see the bird's nest in your oak tree, find the library or grocery store.

How many steps do you need in one day? An average person needs to walk about 8,000 to 10,000 steps per day to keep healthy. You might need to add steps if you had a few "extra" calories. If you eat a cookie, you might need to add some extra steps. At 15-20 steps per calorie, that means 1,500-2,000 steps to burn off that extra 100 calories you ate in that cookie. If that seems like a lot, it might help to know that the average person already walks about 3,000 to 5,000 steps a day. Be sure to start gradually and add a few steps a day.

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