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Your Walking Expert



STROLL SAFELY
Walking in the heat requires taking some extra precautions.

➔ **WALK YOUR WAY THROUGH WARM WEATHER WOES**

Keep Your Cool!

Summer can be the best and worst of times for walkers. While warmer temperatures, sunny skies and chirping birds provide an inviting environment, conditions can also get unpleasant if you don't plan ahead. Here's how to make your summer walks safe and enjoyable.

GET MORE! Learn about summer air quality at healthcentral.com/f/summer-risks

▶ **BE AN EARLY BIRD**
The best time of the day for summer walks is early morning. Temperatures are cooler and there's less pollution. If that doesn't work with your schedule, then aim for evening walks—but don't forget the bug repellent, as mosquitoes are active at dusk. And wear a reflective vest if you're walking after dark. If you must go out during the day, avoid the hottest time—usually between

3 and 6 P.M.—and try to choose a shady route, which can feel as much as 25 degrees cooler.

▶ **SIP BEFORE YOU STEP**
This will ensure that you're hydrated when you start your walk. Runners who sipped a slushie before venturing out in hot, humid conditions were able to keep going 20 percent longer than those who drank water, according to a study in the journal *Medicine*

& *Science in Sports & Exercise*. (Make your own slushie by blending ice with high-water fruits such as berries, watermelon, peaches or plums.) Then carry water or a sports drink and sip every 10 to 15 minutes while walking.

▶ **LIGHTEN UP** Loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothing reflect sunlight instead of absorbing it to keep you cooler. Pale colors are also less likely to attract bugs. (If bugs are a problem, avoid using scented

sunscreens, deodorants and laundry detergent.) Sneakers made of lightweight, breathable fabrics, like mesh, will make your feet sweat less than leather styles.

▶ **STAY DRY** Choose synthetic, moisture-wicking fabrics instead of cotton, which stays damp and can cause chafing. This is especially important when buying socks to prevent blisters. To avoid chafing under arms or between thighs, spread petroleum jelly or a product like BodyGlide

(available at sporting-goods stores) on areas that may rub.

▶ **PROTECT YOUR PEEPERS** You'll have better posture if you wear sunglasses and a rimmed hat. When the sun is in your eyes, you're more likely to look down, which can strain your back.

▶ **HEAD INDOORS** When weather advisories warn that conditions are dangerous for outdoor exercise, try walking indoors at a mall, office building, school or convention center. If hot-weather advisories are the norm in your area, you might also want to invest in a summer gym membership for access to a treadmill.

▶ **LISTEN TO YOUR BODY** If you experience muscle cramps, a headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, weakness or nausea, stop walking and take a break. Drink a beverage with some salt in it, like a sports drink, and rest. If symptoms don't improve within a few minutes, call your doctor.

Great Gear for Summer Walks

CUSTOM WATER CARRIERS Carrying a water bottle can throw off balance, slow you down and cause achiness in your hands, arms and shoulders. Amphipod carriers solve this problem with their H₂O-toting waistbelts that come in a variety of styles. Cost: \$28 and up. Amphipod.com

SKIRT-SHORT COMBOS Wearing tight-fitting bike shorts is a great way to avoid chafing between your thighs, but a running skirt offers a little more coverage. Skirtsports.com offers a variety of lengths. For larger sizes, try Junonia.com. Or if you already have a pair of bike shorts, cover up with a fun design from Sweetspotskirts.com. Cost: \$30 and up.

NECK COOLER Keep your neck cool with one of the many stay-cool towels or neck wraps available in athletic stores or on Amazon.com (such as the Frogg Toggs Chilly Pad Cooling Towel. Cost: \$4 and up). For shorter walks, partially freeze a wet bandanna or towel and then drape it around your neck.

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