

Week 1: Walk to Wellness

Keep It Safe



Being active is usually safe, but sometimes problems can come up. The best way to avoid problems is to prevent them. Here are some ways to prevent common minor injuries.

❑ Prevent sore muscles or cramps

- ✓ Increase only **a little at a time** how often, how intensely, and how long you are active.
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids (especially water) before, during, and after being active.
- ✓ Warm-up before every activity, and cool-down afterwards.

Warming up and cooling down should only take 5 to 10 minutes.

- Do your planned activity but more slowly or at a lower intensity for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Do a few minutes of gentle stretching.

❑ If you do get a muscle cramp, treat it this way:

- ✓ Stretch the muscle, and then massage it. Repeat until the cramp goes away.

- ✓ If you still have pain, put ice on the pain for a few minutes.
- ✓ Then repeat the stretching and massaging.

□ Stretch those muscles!

- ✓ Stretching is one of the best ways to keep muscles from becoming sore, cramped, or injured.
- ✓ Stretching also helps you be more flexible and feel relaxed.

How to Stretch

1. Do a short warm-up *before* stretching.
2. Move slowly until you feel the muscle stretch. A safe stretch is gentle and relaxing.
3. Hold the stretch steady for 15 to 30 seconds. Do **not** bounce.
4. Relax. Then repeat 3 to 5 times.
5. Stretch within your own limits. Do not push yourself.
6. Breathe slowly and naturally. Do not hold your breath.

Important!

Never stretch if you have pain before you begin. If a stretch causes pain, stop doing it. *Listen to your body!*