

Step it up!

Doing the same workout every time isn't necessarily a bad thing – especially if you enjoy it! However, if you're getting bored, not noticing a boost in your fitness level or struggling to achieve or maintain your weight goals, then it could be time for a change. Mixing things up and giving yourself a new challenge can bring great results. Try doing some of the following to reach your goals:

CHANGE YOUR PACE: Switch back and forth between different speeds. For example, walk the length of three houses at your normal pace, then speed it up for the length of one house. Repeat this cycle for the duration of your walk.

HIT THE HILLS: Walking up and down hills is a sure-fire way to burn extra energy, build leg strength and increase the intensity of your walking workout.

ADD RESISTANCE BANDS: Lightweight and compact, these bands provide continuous resistance throughout each movement, making them an effective tool for building muscle and burning body fat.

KATHLEEN ALLEAUME, Exercise scientist



WALKING-INTENSITY GUIDE

EASY PACE

A gentle stroll where you can walk and talk easily (approximately 5km per hour).

MODERATE PACE

You're slightly out of breath and can talk but not sing (approximately 6km per hour).

BRISK PACE

You're breaking a sweat and unable to hold a conversation (approximately 7km per hour)

FUN FITNESS CHALLENGE!

How many star jumps can you do in one minute?

Australian Healthy Food Guide

@hfgaustralia

MONDAY

20 MINUTES OF CIRCUIT TRAINING (see Week 3)

PLUS Five mins of easy walking to warm up/cool down

TUESDAY

45 MINUTES OF BRISK WALKING WITH HILLS

PLUS 10 minutes of full body stretching

WEDNESDAY

25 MINUTES OF BRISK WALKING

PLUS 15 minutes of resistance training (see Week 2)

THURSDAY

20 MINUTES OF INTERVAL TRAINING

A three-minute jog or brisk walk, followed by a one-minute moderate-intensity walk. Repeat five times.

PLUS Five mins of easy walking to warm up/cool down

FRIDAY

20 MINUTES OF CIRCUIT TRAINING (see Week 3)

PLUS Five mins of easy walking to warm up/cool down

SATURDAY

25 MINUTES OF BRISK WALKING

PLUS 15 minutes of resistance training (see Week 2)

SUNDAY

45 MINUTES OF BRISK WALKING WITH HILLS

PLUS 10 minutes of full-body stretching

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Exercise doesn't have to be a dreaded chore. As you get fitter, meet like-minded people, develop better skills and start to see results, you'll find it can be a lot of fun. Here are 20 ways to put some playfulness into your workout.

1 Take it outside. Play tourist in your home town and walk around monuments and historic spots. You could also check out festivals and markets in your area.

2 Listen to music. Almost any sport or exercise can be done to music and you'll be surprised by how much your favourite tunes can energise you.

3 Find exercises you can do at home, and get creative with using things like bags of flour or cans of beans for weights.

4 Download apps and use them to help motivate you. Consider MapMyRun, MyFitnessPal and Mindbody, and/or a fitness tracker watch.

5 Exercise with other people. If you work shifts, commit to exercising with someone who is on the same schedule as you.

6 Bust a move. Turn the music up and have an old-fashioned dance-off.

7 Create a routine. Doing exercise at the same time each day is a helpful way to develop a habit.

8 Sign up for a trial lesson at your local yoga or Pilates studio.

9 Buy a new pair of comfortable shoes or some exercise clothes.

10 Sign up for a fun run or coastal walk with some friends.

11 Plan holidays built around fun activities such as skiing, white-water rafting, canoeing, mountain hiking, cycling, abseiling... the list is endless.

12 Join a running club or track your steps.

13 Always take the stairs instead of the lift. Make it a challenge to beat the people who are taking the lift.

14 Consider a personal trainer. They can keep you motivated, push you past those self-imposed limits and encourage you to set new goals and challenge yourself.

15 Invest in a standing desk.

16 Reward yourself. Set goals and plan special rewards for yourself when you reach them. For example, book in for a massage after a vigorous exercise session, soak yourself in a hot tub or treat yourself to a (healthy) lunch with your exercise buddy.

17 Host a walking meeting at work.

18 Make a game of it. Play catch with the kids, have a game of backyard cricket or just kick a footy around.

19 Join a team sport. You are much more likely to continue your exercise program if there are common goals, you're having a sociable time and other people are counting on your participation.

20 Start a workplace fitness challenge.

