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## Autumn 2008

Summer is pretty much over and we're back into our work and school routines. Now is the time to start thinking about beginning an exercise program or starting up a program that slipped during summer vacation. An exercise I'd like to emphasize is walking . . . one of nature's easiest, most convenient and effective exercise routines. Walking can be done by almost everyone. There are numerous mental and physical benefits such as increased fitness and associated weight loss; increased lung capacity; better posture; better balance with decreased chance of falling; decreased muscle soreness and increased muscle tone; better mental functioning; improved mood; decreased depression and anxiety; better sleep regardless of age; better cardiovascular health and increased circulation in the extremities. In addition, walking is a weight bearing exercise that benefits both men and women at risk of developing osteoporosis, especially post menopausal women. Studies have shown that jogging, walking or climbing stairs for a minimum of 30-45 minutes 3-4 times per week protects bone density.

How to start walking? It's easy. Just put on a pair of comfortable shoes (no flip flops please) and find a route that looks interesting. This can be around the neighborhood, in a nearby mall, or on one of the many trails in your town or state. (Try not to spend too much gas going to a place to walk.) One of the most important factors in continuing to walk is the comfort of your shoes or sneakers. If your feet aren't happy, you won't have a good walk. If possible, buy your walking footwear at a store where sales people understand the types of feet and what footwear best fit each foot type. Many chains carry the latest styles but offer little or no advice on how to properly fit a shoe or sneaker. A store that specializes in running shoes can be a good place to begin since these stores usually have knowledgeable sales people who are active in sports. The sneakers or shoes may cost a little more but will be worth it. Another factor is clothing; it should be light in weight (but appropriate for the weather), layered and easily seen by automobile traffic. If walking on the road, always walk *facing* the oncoming traffic. Lastly, bring

water. Remember, if you're thirsty you are already on the way to dehydration and increased muscle pain.

How long and fast to walk? Start slowly. Map out a short 1-2 mile route and try to cover that distance in 30-40 minutes. Employ a brisk pace that gets your heart rate up but still lets you carry on a conversation. This requires walking faster than a stroll (a pedometer can help). The website [www.walkingconnection.com](http://www.walkingconnection.com) offers useful tips for beginners. Average walking speeds are 3.5 miles per hour for men and 3 miles per hour for women but will vary depending on the age, gender and physical capacity of the individual.

Try to tailor your walk and walking speed to your condition. Once your level of fitness increases, increase the length and or speed of your walk. Another way of increasing the intensity of your walk is to use hiking poles. They increase your heart rate, tone your upper body, decrease your perception of effort and improve your balance. You'll also burn 25% more calories for the same distance! As an avid hiking pole user, I will be happy to talk to anyone interested beginning a walking program or using hiking poles. (We also offer a small supply of quality hiking poles for sale in the office at a reasonable price.)

What's New at Family Chiropractic Center:

You may have noticed some small changes in office hours. This is due to my return to the University of Bridgeport to begin a 3 year course of study in Acupuncture. This program will increase the breadth and depth of my knowledge in this complex discipline with its two thousand year history. Designed for doctors in active practice, most of my courses will be on evenings and weekends. However, there may be times when the office will be closed during the week. Any new hours will be posted at the front door and on the answering machine. We remain committed to providing the same level of attentive patient care during this period as we have in the past. I do not anticipate any change in the attention I provide to my patients. I will be happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about this change.

Autumn is a wonderful time of the year to get outside and enjoy what nature has to offer. Make opportunities to take advantage of the last of the summer's corn and tomatoes and fall's squash, pumpkins, apples and changing leaves. It's a great time of year! Get out and enjoy!

Dr. W

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Chiropractic