

How should each walk feel?

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There are a number of different paces that you should aim to master that will make up your training:

Easy walk – fully conversational, relaxed and in control. 5/10

Steady walk – let the pulse come up a bit, still in control but breathing and putting effort into your walk. 6-7/10

Brisk walk – faster, more power strides, push the effort up, get the heart beating 7-8/10

Interval efforts – power walking at a high intensity, maintain a good tall posture and driving the arms 8-9/10

In detail:

The feeling of not being sure how fast you should train is common.

At the beginning all you are trying to do is get out and exercise. Find a consistency and a frequency of your training first. That should be at **easy pace** or if you can't talk comfortably as you are walking, you're going to fast, simple as that.

Faster than easy, conversational effort is **steady walking**. This is the backbone of training for more experienced walkers. This is where you must be honest, so conversation should still be possible, but a little strained.

Incorporating **brisk walking** efforts will see you getting into shape more quickly and efficiently. This is where you are walking at a controlled discomfort level: you can still talk between breaths, but only 5 or 6 word phrases.

Interval training and shorter, faster blocks of power walking, using over hilly terrain to get your heart pumping hard.

Rest

To help your body cope with the workload, rest is going to be as important a part of your training schedule as the walking. Listen to your body and take heed of any warning signs. If you feel fatigued even before you've left the front door, find yourself thinking up excuses not to train or start suffering a series of minor injuries; you probably need more time off. Taking enough rest allows physical and mental recovery and gives your body the time to adapt to your workload. Remember: on rest days, that is exactly what you should be doing!

Long Walks

Long walks are vital in your plan and key to being confident of tackling your planned event distance. At first, concentrate on increasing the time on your feet rather than worrying about distance. Start off by heading out for at least an hour and walk at a fully conversational pace. Gradually this will build to to include some steady and brisk walking as you get stronger. These effort improve your muscular endurance and condition your body to the mileage you'll tackle on event day. Use these session to practice with fuelling your walks and bedding in new kit.

Hills

Hill running develops strength in your muscles and tendons without putting them under the type of stress they are exposed to during faster training such as running. Walk up a 5-15% gradient with a strong, powerful stride as a 'power walk'. Turn immediately at the top and walk down the hill at an easy effort.

Fartlek

This is a Swedish term that literally means "speed play". It involves a number of bursts of effort over a variety of distances with a variable recovery. Originally the length of effort was based on the terrain, for example, pushing harder every time you came to a climb, no matter how long it was. But you can adapt it for your needs. Try to include a mix of faster paces and aim to do between 5 and 15 faster efforts during your walk using hills, lampposts, trees or other landmarks to targets for your harder efforts. These can be great fun when walking with others.

Cross Training & Core Conditioning

It is important that your training is balanced with some non-impact activities such as swimming, cycling, rowing, aerobics, etc, otherwise you are more likely to pick up an annoying injury that will set back your training. But more experienced walkers should also add cross training to their regime. You should aim to work a variety of muscle groups and not just your legs. Remember, though, that you are a walker, so just be careful not to make the cross-training, whether it is core conditioning, lifting weights, using an elliptical trainer or practicing Pilates, so intense that you are left too tired for your specific training.



Improver Walking Training Plan – 20km



Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
1	Rest	30 minute walk to include 3 x 5 minutes brisk effort, 2 minute easy effort recovery	15-20 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	Cross training (bike, cross trainer, rowing) – easy 30 minutes	Rest	8 mins easy walking + 8 x 1 minute brisk up hill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 5 mins easy walking	Easy walk 60-70 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
2	Rest or easy swim or bike – 30 mins	30 minute walk to include 5 x 4 minutes brisk effort, 90s easy recovery	20 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	Cross training – easy 30 minutes	Rest	8 mins easy walking + 8 x 1 minute brisk up hill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 8 mins easy walking	Easy 70 - 80minutes over a hilly route	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
3	Rest or easy swim or bike – 30 mins	40 minute walk to include 5 x 5 minutes brisk effort, 90s easy recovery	20-30 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	Cross training – easy 30 minutes	Rest	8 mins steady walking + 8 x 90s brisk up hill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 8 mins steady walking	Easy 90 -100 minutes over a hilly route	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
4	easy swim or bike – 30 mins + strength & conditioning/core	40 minute walk to include 5 x 5 minutes brisk effort, 90s easy recovery	30 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	Cross training – 30 progression of 10 minutes easy, 10 minutes steady, 10 minutes 'threshold'	Rest	10 mins steady walking + 10 x 90s minute brisk up hill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 10 mins steady walking	Easy 1hr 40-50 minutes over a hilly route	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
5	Rest	20 minute walk to include 3 x 4 minutes brisk effort, 2 minute easy effort recovery	20-30 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	Cross training – easy 30 minutes	Rest	40 minute walk to include 4 x 5 minutes brisk effort, 90s easy recovery	Easy 60 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
6	easy swim or bike – 30 mins + strength & conditioning/core	45 minute walk to include 6 x 5 minutes brisk effort, 90s easy recovery	40 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	Cross training – 30 progression of 10 minutes easy, 10 minutes steady, 10 minutes 'threshold'	Rest	40 minute 'fartlek' walk using landmarks	Easy 2hrs over a hilly route with navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹

7	easy swim or bike – 30 mins + strength & conditioning/core	45 minute walk to include 3 x 10 minutes brisk effort, 120s easy recovery	40 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	Cross training – 30 progression of 10 minutes easy, 10 minutes steady, 10 minutes 'threshold'	Rest	40 minute 'fartlek' walk using landmarks including hills	Easy 2hrs 10-20 mins over a hilly route with navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
8	easy swim or bike – 30 mins + strength & conditioning/core	45 minute walk to include 3 x 10 minutes brisk effort, 90s easy recovery	40 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	45 minute 'fartlek' walk using landmarks including hills	Rest	Cross training – 45 progression of 15 minutes easy, 15 minutes steady, 15 minutes 'threshold'	2 hrs 30 mins with the final 30 mins at a steady effort with navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
9	Rest	40 minute 'out and back' walk – walk out for 20 minutes, turn and get back to the start 2-3 mins quicker	40 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	45 minute 'fartlek' walk using landmarks	Rest	Cross training – 45 progression of 15 minutes easy, 15 minutes steady, 15 minutes 'threshold'	3hrs with the final 45 mins at a steady effort with navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
10	easy swim or bike – 30 mins + strength & conditioning/core	40 minute 'out and back' walk – walk out for 20 minutes, turn and get back to the start 2-3 mins quicker	30-40 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	45 minute 'fartlek' walk using landmarks	Rest	Cross training – 45 progression of 15 minutes easy, 15 minutes steady, 15 minutes 'threshold'	3hrs mins all easy with navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
11	easy swim or bike – 30 mins + strength & conditioning/core	40 minute walk to include 5 x 5 minutes brisk effort, 90s easy recovery	20-30 minute steady walk before breakfast + Core	40 minute 'fartlek' walk using landmarks	Rest	30 minute easy walk and stretch	100 minute walk all easy effort	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹
12	Rest	30-40 minute walk to include 3 x 5 minutes brisk effort, 90s easy recovery	20 minute steady walk before breakfast or rest if tired + Core	30 minute easy walk	Rest	20 minute easy walk and stretch	25km walk	<input type="checkbox"/>	☺ ☹ ☹

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- Always substitute cross training for walking if you are injured, very sore or it is not safe to train outdoors.

- **Please add a Core conditioning, Pilates or Yoga classes once or twice a week if you have time.**
- **Try to stretch every day for at least 10 mins.**
- **Fuel your long walks well with regular snacking on healthy carbohydrate and protein and sipping water throughout.**