

# Amp Up Your Walk 5 Ways

**Walking is a great form of exercise, especially if you enjoy moving in comfort.** It's widely accessible and easy for most. As you adjust to walking for fitness, here are some ways to step up the intensity, benefits and pleasure of your walking workouts.



**1. Add speed.** Here's how: Take your normal-sized steps or slightly smaller steps and focus on a quicker movement. Keep your shoulders relaxed as you pump your arms close to your body for additional momentum and balance.

**2. Add incline.** If you walk outdoors, take to the hills. If you use a treadmill, you can ramp up the incline. When walking on flat surfaces begins to feel easier, challenge yourself to ramp up the incline — maintaining the same pace, you'll burn more calories. Extra: Walking uphill also helps strengthen your bones better than walking on flat surfaces does.

**3. Add intervals.** Alternating between higher and lower intensities throughout your workout yields better fitness improvements and more calorie burn than a continuous steady pace. It's a natural way to boost your speed and walking intensity gradually.

**4. Add some music.** Studies suggest music helps walkers move faster and longer before feeling their fatigue. Why not consider adding a soundtrack to your workouts for an extra push and pleasure? **Note:** Don't play your favorite tunes too loudly. Protect your hearing and make sure you can still hear sounds around you, such as cars.

**5. If you have a dog who loves to walk, lucky you.** Add a park route to your walks and spend a few minutes playing fetch along the way with your canine buddy.

**If you're not used to regular exercise, get your health care provider's okay first.** If you have a chronic condition, such as heart disease, consult your provider before intensifying your walking routine.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Health Benefits of Volunteering**, is at [personalbest.com/extras/23V9tools](https://personalbest.com/extras/23V9tools).

## BEST bits

|| **Do you know the difference between disease, disorder, condition and syndrome?** A disease is a specific health or medical issue that is diagnosable; it may or may not be treatable. A disorder is a disruption in a normal body and the cause can be unknown and individual (e.g., sinus problems). A health condition refers to a physical or mental illness, injury or impairment; it can be continuous or recurring, such as allergies and headaches. A syndrome refers to a group of symptoms occurring together, such as chronic fatigue syndrome.



|| **Here's a reminder during Healthy Aging Month to practice these personal wellness measures throughout your life.** In addition to eating and sleeping well and staying physically active, stay connected. Social connections are vital for healthy aging. Stay in touch with family and friends; join groups with activities that interest you. Volunteer in your community, and keep learning to keep your mind sharp and engaged. It may help prevent cognitive decline and improve your overall well-being. Know your family history of chronic diseases; ask your health care provider about preventive steps to avoid them.



|| **Bone and Joint Health National Action Week runs October 12 to 18.** Bone, joint and back ailments, such as chronic pain, arthritis and osteoporosis, are among the most common health problems worldwide. Poor bone and joint health can lead to disability, falls and injuries. Check with your health care provider about bone density testing as well as any joint issues that concern you.



|| **Memorizing 988 could save a life.** Suicide is often not discussed openly, but it should be. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the U.S., resulting in about one death every 11 minutes, according to the CDC. **September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month**, a time to learn about immediate help available 24/7 for someone who may be in crisis and contemplating self-harm. The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) urges using these free resources for assistance if you or someone you know is possibly suicidal: Call or text **988** to the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** to be connected with crisis counselors for emotional support and other services. Help is also available via web chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) and immediately by texting **741-741** to reach a free, trained counselor.

# How You Can Guard Against Cancer

**Cancer is the second-leading cause of death in the U.S. after heart disease.** Controllable lifestyle and environmental factors cause some cancers. Abundant scientific evidence shows you can significantly lower your cancer risk with healthy lifestyle changes. These include:



**Avoiding or quitting tobacco.** Tobacco products and secondhand smoke have many chemicals that damage DNA, potentially leading to conditions, such as leukemia and cancers of the lung, bladder, kidney, liver, stomach, pancreas, colon and rectum and cervix.

**Avoiding heavy alcohol use** (more than one or two drinks per day), which raises your risk of several cancers (e.g., liver, breast). The more you drink, the higher your risks.

**Avoiding obesity** to lower your risk of several cancers, including cancers of the breast (in women past menopause), colon, rectum, kidney, pancreas and gallbladder.

**Avoiding excess sun exposure** to reduce ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which causes early skin aging and damage that can lead to skin cancer.

**Reducing exposure to cancer-causing environmental substances**, such as asbestos, benzene, cadmium, formaldehyde and radon.

**Asking your health care provider** if you need the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine.

**Getting regular physical activity.** This is associated with a lower risk for several types of cancer, including breast, prostate, colon, endometrium and possibly pancreatic cancer.

**Eating a balanced, plant-based diet.** To help prevent cancer, enjoy vegetables, fruit, whole grains, nuts and beans often. Avoid excessive amounts of red or processed meat.

## Overcome That Exercise Plateau

**After exercising regularly for weeks or months, you have more stamina and have lost weight.** But you're not seeing more weight loss, more muscle definition or the ability to move faster — signs you've reached an exercise plateau.

**Don't despair.** Hitting a fitness plateau means you've **improved** your fitness, up to a point.

**You can overcome the plateau by remembering FITT**, which stands for these exercise principles to help you overcome an exercise plateau:

- **F is for frequency.** Add more sessions.
- **I is for intensity.** Rev up your heart rate, if you don't have heart problems, to 65% to 90% of the heart rate maximum for your age (with your health care provider's okay).
- **T is for time.** Did you reach your exercise plateau after 20 to 30 minutes? Exercise for 60 minutes.
- **T is for type of exercise.** Vary your workouts. Consider exercises you may not have tried, such as biking, swimming, tennis and weight training.



**Consider a personal trainer for at least a session or two.** But don't overdo it; get plenty of rest, stay hydrated and explore ways to have fun as you exercise.

## Making Sense of Medical Studies



Scientists use medical studies to test new medicines, surgeries, procedures or medical devices among groups

of people. These studies can help confirm how and if new proposed treatments are effective and safe. Medical research includes experiments, comparative analyses, surveys and interviews.

**Clinical studies are the most thorough.**

Example: Comparing a new medicine against (a) the current medicine used to treat the same disease, (b) a treatment that contains no active ingredients, called a **placebo** or (c) no treatment.

**Observational studies** review what occurs when people follow a certain treatment or behavior. Example: Comparing the health of people who exercise every day with the health of those who don't exercise routinely.

**Randomized trials** help determine if treatments or diagnostic tests are effective. Example: A trial compares diabetic patients with implanted insulin pumps against diabetic patients (control group) who receive multiple insulin injections.

**Cohort studies** follow large groups of people typically for a long period of time. Researchers use data from cohort studies to understand human health and the factors that influence it.

**Note:** One study rarely provides a scientific standard of proof.





## It's National Cholesterol Education Month,

a perfect time to learn about high-density lipoprotein (HDL). You probably know unhealthy cholesterol levels can be a major risk factor for heart disease. But your total cholesterol number isn't the whole story. While low-density lipoprotein (LDL) is the bad cholesterol that collects in blood vessel walls, HDL helps protect the heart by moving some of the LDL to the liver for elimination. **Bottom line:** To raise your HDL and help protect your heart health, Harvard heart experts advise losing weight if needed, exercising regularly, replacing refined carbs with whole grains and adding more proteins, such as fresh, frozen or canned fish, lean chicken or ground turkey, or plant-based options, to your diet. Also, if you smoke, quit.



## TIP of the MONTH Family Meals

Family meals are a time when children can learn important life skills, including table manners, communication and how to recognize and enjoy a wide variety of foods. A recent study shows that sharing leisurely meals as a family can also help increase a child's vegetable and fruit intake. Researchers found that just ten extra minutes at the dining table can help kids eat about three to four more bites of fruits and vegetables compared to rushed or shorter meals.

# Cancer-Fighting Foods

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

**Research shows that certain dietary patterns can help prevent cancer or slow its growth.** Specifically, a Mediterranean or plant-based diet — where most of the foods on your plate come from vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes — is often recommended for cancer prevention.

**The cancer-fighting foods in this dietary pattern** are filled with antioxidants, vitamins and other compounds that reduce inflammation, protect cells from damage and may prevent the growth and spread of cancer cells.

**There is no single food that can prevent or treat cancer.** The overall dietary pattern matters more than any one food, so consume a variety of these nourishing foods daily:

- Cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, kale and cauliflower.
- Berries, such as blueberries, strawberries and raspberries.
- Leafy green vegetables, such as spinach and romaine.
- Orange vegetables and fruits, such as carrots, squash and oranges.
- Garlic, onions, ginger and turmeric.
- Tomatoes.
- Tea and coffee.
- Nuts and seeds, such as flax, chia and walnuts.
- Beans, peas, lentils and soy.



**Note:** These foods have been researched for their anti-cancer potential when consumed as part of a healthy dietary pattern.

**Now that you have a long list of foods to include more often,** there's also a short list of foods and beverages to consume less often, since they may contain cancer-promoting compounds. It's wise to cut back on:

- Alcohol, including beer, wine and spirits.
- Processed meat, such as salami, hotdogs and sausages.
- Burnt and charred foods, such as barbecued meat.
- Sugary foods, such as soda and candy.
- Refined grain products, such as white bread, cookies and cake.

**An occasional hotdog or sweet treat is not a problem.** It's overall daily eating habits that have the largest impact on cancer prevention and matter more than any one meal.

## Rainbow Oven-Roasted Vegetables

## EASY recipe

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 red pepper, seeded and diced (1 inch)         | 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil |
| 2 medium carrots, peeled and sliced into rounds | 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar       |
| 1 yellow pepper, seeded and diced (1 inch)      | ½ tsp salt                    |
| 3 cups broccoli florets                         | 1 tsp oregano                 |
| 3 cups purple cabbage, diced (1 inch)           | ¼ cup crumbled goat cheese    |



**Preheat** oven to 400°F. **Line** baking tray with parchment or foil. **Add** vegetables in rows according to the rainbow: red pepper, carrot, yellow pepper, broccoli and cabbage. **Drizzle** with olive oil, vinegar, salt and oregano. **Roast** in oven 20-25 minutes, until vegetables are tender-crisp. **Top** with goat cheese and serve.

**Makes 4 servings. Per serving:** 142 calories | 4g protein | 8g total fat | 1g saturated fat | 3g mono fat | 3g poly fat | 17g carb | 9g sugar (0 added sugar) | 6g fiber | 355mg sodium

## Stay in Touch

Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

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## EXPERT advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

### Q: What is cardiomyopathy?

**A:** **Cardiomyopathy is a heart muscle disorder.** The condition can weaken your heart muscle and make it harder for it to pump blood throughout your body. Viral illnesses, such as COVID-19, can cause cardiomyopathy as can heart attacks, heart valve problems and high blood pressure. Other culprits include obesity, diabetes, thyroid disease and drug or alcohol abuse. Genetic factors may play a role.

**Signs and symptoms:** Cardiomyopathy can cause shortness of breath, swelling of the legs or feet, abdominal bloating and coughing or trouble breathing while lying down. Other symptoms include fatigue, chest discomfort, palpitations or dizziness. Contact your health care provider if you have these symptoms. Call 911 if you experience severe breathlessness, fainting or chest pain lasting more than a few minutes.

**Health care options:** Treatments for cardiomyopathy include medications, surgery or, more rarely, heart transplantation. Lifestyle measures can help manage this condition. Losing excess weight, quitting smoking, restricting salt, avoiding alcohol and exercising with your health care provider's guidance may provide protection and benefits.



September is National Food Safety Education Month.



## 8 Tips to Prevent Foodborne Illness

**Food poisoning can happen to anyone,** but people older than 65 years, children under five years, pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems are more at risk. Here are eight ways to help avoid foodborne illness:



1. Wash your hands and food surfaces with warm, soapy water before and after preparing foods.
2. Rinse produce under running water before eating or preparing it even if you don't plan on eating the peel. Don't wash raw meat, poultry or eggs.
3. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate in the refrigerator and use one cutting board for raw meats, poultry and seafood and another cutting board for everything else to avoid cross-contamination.
4. Use a food thermometer to ensure that foods are cooked to the correct internal temperature.
5. Refrigerate food promptly before bacteria can multiply. **Caution:** Bacteria can multiply rapidly in the danger zone between 40°F and 140°F. **Tip:** Divide warm or hot leftovers into small containers to help them chill faster.
6. Never leave out perishable foods for more than two hours (or one hour if the temperature exceeds 90°F).
7. Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator overnight, in cold water or in the microwave. Never leave frozen foods on the counter to thaw out.
8. Never eat raw batter, dough or other foods with uncooked eggs or flour.

Learn more at [foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts](https://foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts).



**If you live with chronic pain, you aren't alone.** September is **Pain Awareness Month**, an opportunity to learn about chronic pain, which lasts for more than three months. It affects more than one in five Americans and can range from ongoing back and nerve pain to chronic migraines and pain from past injuries or ongoing conditions, such as arthritis and diabetes. Chronic pain can interfere with work, recreation and family relationships. If you have chronic pain, talk to your health care provider about pain-relieving procedures, medications, exercises and relaxation techniques which may reduce discomfort and, if needed, counseling to help you cope. Learn more at [acpanow.com](https://acpanow.com).