

## **Wisdom for Walkers**

Even the most committed walkers will admit that, sometimes, putting one foot in front of the other can get a little boring, especially if you're covering the same old route day after day. Never fear -- boredom relief is here.

**Have a destination.** Stop by a friend's house, grab a bite to eat at your favorite restaurant/cafe, or volunteer at a non-profit organization within walking distance.

**“Read.”** Stop by the Marion County Public Library to pick up a book on cd (or tape) or go to <http://wvdeli.lib.overdrive.com> to download a book straight to your mp3 player. Learn a foreign language, get caught up in a new romance or mystery novel, discover your favorite historic character's dirty little secrets, or find out how to properly remodel your kitchen. You'll exercise your mind as well as your body.

**Learn something new about Downtown Fairmont.** Explore the history, architecture, and places that make Fairmont unique with the help of Main Street Fairmont's podcasts. Go to [www.MainStreetFairmont.org](http://www.MainStreetFairmont.org) and download Finding Fairmont's History for free.

**Listen to music.** There's no question that listening to music can help while exercising. It keeps a steady beat going and research shows that music puts your mind into a mild state of euphoria.

**Walk your daily errands.** Find safe, comfortable routes to your post office, library, video store, and market, and put on a backpack.

**Monitor your legs.** Clip on a pedometer, and watch how quickly the miles add up.

**Exercise your wallet as well as your body.** Head downtown and window-shop while you walk. Then reward a good workout with a small purchase.

**Count squirrels.** Or cardinals. Or cats -- there are lots of them out there.

**Find a walking buddy or join/start a walking club.** The commitment will get you out of the house; the talk makes the walk fun. It's great for both the routes and the companionship.

**Walk the dog.** Not only will you have a purpose for the outing, but you'll have a good listener too.

**Cross-train.** Do some very slow walking lunges, try some slow side squats, or walk backward for a while. Or try walking and then running a little, or walk fast for 3 minutes, then return to your normal speed. It breaks the monotony, and it builds strength and endurance.

**Nature-walk.** Seek out routes blessed with woods, bodies of water, or views of the hills.

**Pace your mail carrier.** They've developed an art and science out of walking. Walk along and chat with him or her.

**Practice the relaxation response.** Harvard's Herbert Benson, M.D., author of *Timeless Healing* (Simon & Schuster, 1997), has proved that the relaxation response significantly reduces symptoms of physical stress, including high blood pressure. "While walking, focus on a repetition. If you're spiritual, repeat a prayer while you're walking," he advises. "If you're not, repeat something else, or focus on your footfalls."

**Learn how to race walk.** It burns more calories, works more muscles and has better cardiovascular benefits. See sites like [www.racewalk.com](http://www.racewalk.com)

**Bird watch.** Take along a guide to your region's birds, and educate yourself.

**Keep it fresh.** Between July and October, visit the Fairmont Farmers Market at the corner of Madison and Adams St. on Tuesdays from 4-6pm or Saturdays from 8-10am. You'll find some delicious local produce and goodies that will contribute to your healthy lifestyle.