

CENGAGE LEARNING ACTIVITY SERIES

# Walking For Fun and Fitness

Jerald D. Hawkins | Sandra M. Hawkins



FOURTH EDITION

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**Jerald D. Hawkins**

Professor Emeritus  
Lander University



**Sandra M. Hawkins**

Wellness Consultant



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**Walking for Fun and Fitness, Fourth Edition**

Jerald D. Hawkins, Sandra M. Hawkins

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# Preface

We believe if you walk for fun and enjoyment, fitness will be your reward. Sound too simple? We know personally, and research supports, that walking has many advantages over other forms of exercise; that is why it is the most popular form of exercise among Americans who exercise regularly. The simple truth is that walking is both fun and a great fitness activity. Throughout this book, we look at many of the reasons why this is so.

- Part One (Chapters 1–3) is an introduction to the nature and benefits of the wonderful activity of walking.
- Part Two (Chapters 4–7) explores the “how tos” of designing and sticking with a fun, effective program. Specific topics include exercise principles, walking mechanics, planning essentials, and motivation and incentive techniques.
- Part Three (Chapters 8–10) deals with issues related to maximizing the effectiveness of your walking program: injury prevention and care, nutrition, weight management, and walking resources.
- The appendices contain personal worksheets for calculating your target heart rate, establishing your walking accountability plan, determining your estimated daily energy expenditure, and charting your walking progress.

As physical educators, former runners and aerobics instructors, and proud and devoted grandparents, we share a commitment to fitness for ourselves and others. Having discovered the myriad benefits that walking has to offer, this book is our way of sharing both the fun and fitness of walking. Today we are more

convinced than ever that if you will avail yourself of the knowledge and use the motivation techniques contained in this book, you, too, will discover that walking truly is fun—and if you walk for fun, fitness will come.

## Dedication

This book is dedicated to our grandchildren, Sydnee, Erin, Elizabeth, Katie, Nathan, Caroline, and Kennedy. Walking with them is always a delightful adventure. We love you.

## Acknowledgments

We express sincere gratitude to Liana Monari and Sushila Rajagopal whose untiring guidance, support, and creative efforts have brought this project to life.

## About the Authors

**Jerald D. Hawkins** earned his Ed.D. from the University of Georgia. He is a professor emeritus of physical education and exercise studies at Lander University. Recipient of the 1990 South Carolina Association for Health, Physical, Education, Recreation, and Dance College/University Physical Educator of the Year Award, the 1998 Lander University Distinguished Professor award, the 1999 South Carolina Governor's Professor of the Year award, and the 2005 SCAHPERD Scholar award, he is a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine. Dr. Hawkins is a sought-after speaker and consultant and the author of numerous

professional articles, book chapters, and other books.

**Sandra M. Hawkins** received her M.A.T. from Winthrop University. She retired from Lander University where she served as coordinator of field placement for the College of Education and is a former elementary and university physical educator and fitness instructor. She served as the first president of the South Carolina Association for Physical Education and Sport and, in 1993, was recognized with that organization's Elementary Physical Educator of the

Year Award. She is the author of several articles on fitness walking and creative activities for children.

Together, the authors provide wellness consultation services, speaking, writing, and conducting workshops on a variety of topics including fitness walking, nutrition, stress management, playground supervision and safety, and legal issues in physical education, exercise, and sport.

*Photography by*  
The authors

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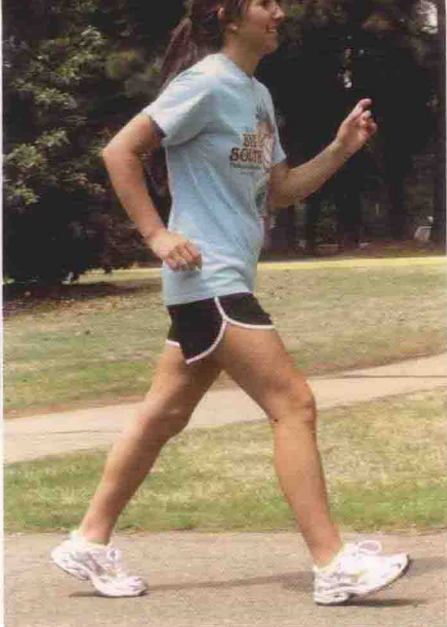
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The sum of the whole  
is this: walk and be  
happy; walk and be  
healthy. The best way  
to lengthen out our  
days is to walk steadily  
and with a purpose.

Charles Dickens

**T**hroughout history, man has used exercise in an attempt to improve athletic performance, prevent illness, recover from injury, slow the aging process, and for a variety of other reasons. While exercise has never been proven to be the cure-all for people's ills that some have touted it to be, exercise-related fitness (often referred to as *physical fitness*) is universally recognized as an integral part of a healthy lifestyle.

## History of Fitness in America

Americans have traditionally had an on again, off again infatuation with exercise and fitness. Sport historians point out that fitness booms tend to follow closely on the heels of our involvement in war. World War I and II and the Korean War all brought with their conclusions a national interest in improved fitness, spurred on by the concern over the physical condition of our troops. Such interest, however, was usually short-lived and tended to wane as the United States returned to the prosperity of peacetime.

During the mid-1960s, America was at war in Southeast Asia, and once again, the fitness of our young people became an issue of major

concern. In the wake of this new-found interest, young people and adults alike began engaging in personal exercise programs at a rate never before seen in this country. Jogging, walking, aerobics, and a myriad of other activities became a way of life for millions of Americans. Although initially considered just another fitness fad, it soon became apparent that exercise and exercise-related fitness were concepts whose time had truly come. What may have begun as a fad has become a commitment on the part of millions of Americans to a healthier and more active lifestyle.

In the late 1960s, Dr. Kenneth Cooper, a former Air Force physician, wrote the book *Aerobics* and became the father of the fitness revolution in America. As a result of his extensive research and personal experiences, Cooper has convinced numerous Americans that the key to improved health and fitness is aerobic (cardiorespiratory) exercise. His idea that the quality of our lives in the future will be directly determined by the way we live in the present has been echoed by numerous fitness and medical experts. Simply stated, we have come to understand that living a healthy lifestyle today is an investment in a healthy, enjoyable life in the future.

- \*1. Aerobic (Cardiorespiratory) Fitness
2. Flexibility
3. Muscular Strength
- \*4. Muscular Endurance
- \*5. Body Composition

\*These components are directly affected by regular fitness walking.

**FIGURE 1.1** Components of Health-Related Fitness.

The 1990s saw the maturing of the baby boomers. Many experts consider this large segment of the United States population to be the first generation with a truly conscious commitment to personal health and fitness. Therefore, the motto for many adults in the twenty-first century has become “Fit is in.”

## What Does “Being Fit” Mean?

The term *fitness* is not easily defined. Many attempts at developing a simple and concise definition have failed. The major problem with defining fitness is that it is not a simple concept. Early attempts at describing fitness were based on the notion that “being fit” means that a person can complete his or her daily routine and still have enough energy to engage in recreational activities. While this may sound reasonable, such a description does little to account for differences in “daily routines.” One person’s daily routine may be composed primarily of desk work, with very little physical activity, whereas another person may spend most of the day in relatively strenuous physical activity such as construction work. The construction worker may be less than enthusiastic about rushing to the gym to work out than a friend who works behind the desk, but does this mean he or she is less fit?

From a practical standpoint, fitness is simply the extent to which the body can function efficiently. “Being fit,” therefore, means having a healthy body that allows you to enjoy life to its fullest. The concept of health-related fitness may be best understood by looking at the specific components that compose it: aerobic (or cardiorespiratory) fitness, muscular fitness, and body composition (Figure 1.1).

## Aerobic Fitness

Many fitness experts consider aerobic or cardiorespiratory fitness to be the most important single exercise-related health fitness component because of its relationship to the prevention and control of America’s number one killer, cardiovascular disease. Every year in the United States, cardiovascular disease (disease of the heart and vascular system) kills almost as many people as all other causes of death combined. What makes this fact even more startling is the realization that many of these cardiovascular deaths could be prevented if only people would make some rather simple, positive lifestyle changes and stick with them. Among those behaviors most directly linked with cardiovascular disease are cigarette smoking, obesity, poor nutrition, and *lack of regular exercise*.

While the precise role of exercise-related fitness in the prevention of cardiovascular disease remains a

topic of constant debate, evidence continues to mount that regular aerobic exercise produces positive changes in one's level of aerobic fitness that in turn enhance a person's chances of reducing the severity of cardiovascular disease, if not preventing its onset altogether.

*Aerobic exercise* is exercise that produces positive physiological effects on the heart, blood, vascular system, and lungs. In very simple terms, the body requires energy to carry out its functioning. Energy is necessary for the digestive system to process the food we eat, for the brain to carry on its decision-making processes, and, of course, for the muscles to contract, whether to pick up the morning paper from the yard or lift the feet time after time as we take a pleasant walk around the neighborhood. The body has three ways in which energy can be produced, the most efficient of which is known as *aerobic energy production*, or the utilization of oxygen to produce energy. In a very real sense, the body “prefers” to produce its needed energy aerobically because (1) the energy output from the aerobic system is much more plentiful than that from the two anaerobic systems, and (2) the by-products of aerobic energy production are water and carbon dioxide, both easily metabolized by the body, whereas the major by-product of the main (with respect to exercise) anaerobic energy system is lactic acid, a fatigue-causing substance. From a health perspective, however, the most important advantage of aerobic fitness is its relationship to the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

## Muscular Fitness

*Muscular fitness* is the second major health fitness component. To be more precise, muscular fitness is really three separate and distinct components that combine to produce a functionally efficient muscular

system. All movement produced by the body is the direct result of muscle action. Therefore, we depend on the muscles to provide us with the ability to move as we choose without the fear of injury or undue fatigue. This ability to move efficiently, though often taken for granted, plays a vital role in our daily health and well-being.

## Flexibility

The first muscular fitness component is *flexibility*, or the ability of a muscle or muscle group to stretch without injury. With poor flexibility, muscles are susceptible to strains (muscle pulls) ranging in severity from mild pain and aggravation to temporary or extended loss of function requiring bed rest, physician care, and lost work time. Lack of flexibility has also been associated with chronic lower-back pain problems (discussed later). The hamstring muscles (muscle group in the back of the thigh) work with the abdominal muscles to stabilize the pelvic girdle. If flexibility of the hamstrings is not maintained, they will tend to tighten, exaggerating the pelvic tilt allowed by the weak abdominal muscles, further complicating the problem of chronic lower-back pain.

The old adage “Use it or lose it” is never more appropriate than when referring to flexibility. Children are generally very flexible, as noted when an infant chews on his toe or puts her foot behind her head. This flexibility, however, is usually short-lived unless the child remains active and engages in flexibility-related activities such as gymnastics or wrestling. As adults, we can lose flexibility rather rapidly unless we make a conscious effort to maintain it. In short, flexibility does not have to dissipate with age, but it often does because of a simple lack of exercise.

## Muscular Strength

The second component of muscular fitness is muscular strength. *Muscular strength* is simply the ability of a muscle

or muscle group to contract forcefully against a resistance. Strength is generally more directly associated with athletic prowess than with health fitness, though it is widely accepted that everyone needs a modicum of muscular strength to function effectively on a day-to-day basis, especially if the daily routine requires lifting, pushing, pulling, or carrying heavy objects.

There is an even more direct link between muscular strength and health fitness for the general population. The abdominal muscles act to stabilize the pelvic girdle. When they are fit and strong, the pelvic girdle is maintained in its natural position. However, when the abdominal muscles become weak and out of shape, the pelvic girdle is allowed to tilt abnormally, placing stress on the lower back. This condition may, over time, lead to chronic lower-back pain, a problem all too common today. Often, such pain may be reduced or even eliminated through regular abdominal strengthening exercises, such as bent-knee abdominal curls (sit-ups). Probably the most common type of muscular strength exercise is weight training—the systematic lifting of free weights or work with other devices designed to produce muscular strength gains.

### Muscular Endurance

*Muscular endurance*, the ability of a muscle or muscle group to contract repeatedly without undue fatigue, is the final muscular fitness component. To illustrate, one of the first problems encountered by a person when he or she initiates a walking or jogging program is how rapidly the legs become fatigued. This is because the muscles are not accustomed to the stress of repetitive work and are easily tired. Like strength, endurance is often associated more with athletic performance (e.g., distance running) than with health fitness. Muscular fatigue, however, can make even a leisurely walk in the mall an unpleasant experience.

Unlike strength, endurance is most effectively developed through systematically engaging in exercise requiring the muscles to work repetitively against moderate resistance. Such activities as walking, jogging, and bicycling are excellent for improving muscular endurance (as well as circulation) in the legs.

### Body Composition

The final major component of exercise-related health fitness is *body composition*, which is simply a person's relative amount of fat versus fat-free weight. The human body is composed of many types of tissue—muscle, bone, blood, and fat, just to name a few. To function efficiently, the body needs a requisite amount of fat, since fat plays a vital role in the conduction of nerve impulses, insulation and protection of vital organs, utilization of fat-soluble vitamins, and maintenance of healthy skin. This fat is referred to as *essential fat*. The body generally stores additional fat to be used for energy should the need arise. This fat is often referred to as *expendable fat*. When one's fat stores become excessive, the results are health-threatening and may include the inability to regulate body temperature normally; the tendency toward diabetes; stress on the lower back, knees, and ankles, leading to chronic orthopedic problems; and stress on the cardiorespiratory system, resulting in an enhanced probability of cardiovascular disease.

Health experts now consider obesity a disease in itself. Whereas cigarette smoking has traditionally been called America's number one cause of preventable disability and death, obesity now shares that dubious distinction. It is estimated that about one of every three Americans is obese, an alarming statistic. (For a more detailed discussion of body composition and weight management, see Chapter 10.)

The surest path to personal fitness and wellness is a commitment to a healthy lifestyle, one characterized by eating right, not smoking or abusing drugs, managing stress, and exercising on a regular basis. What more enjoyable way to exercise our way to fitness than walking?

## Walking: A Brief History

Since the dawn of creation, humans have used walking as a practical and inexpensive means of transportation. It has been suggested that walking has been a popular activity ever since people first had somewhere to go and a need for some way to get there. Most Americans can remember when children walked to school, many adults walked to work, and a stroll around the block was a regular after-dinner event.

However, transportation is only one of many ways in which walking has become an integral part of our world. Walking contests were popular in Europe for hundreds of years before being introduced in the United States in the 1870s. They became

commonplace in America, with early races often featuring six-day marathon events on indoor oval walking tracks. Race walkers were among the most celebrated athletes of the time. In 1909, Edward Payson Weston walked from San Francisco to New York City in 104 days. Today, many walking enthusiasts consider Rob Sweetgall America's premier fitness walker, having walked 11,600 miles in 363 days in what he called his "50-State Walk for the Health of It."

The most recent survey of fitness and leisure activities by the National Sporting Goods Association, one of the nation's leading sources of market research, indicates that walking is the most popular aerobic fitness activity in the United States today. Among the survey's list of most popular sport and fitness activities, walking ranked number one with nearly 81 million participants (Figure 1.2). People are discovering that walking is both fun and effective for improving fitness through aerobic development, muscular improvement, stress management, and weight control. What is more, the risk of injury is significantly less with walking than with most other forms

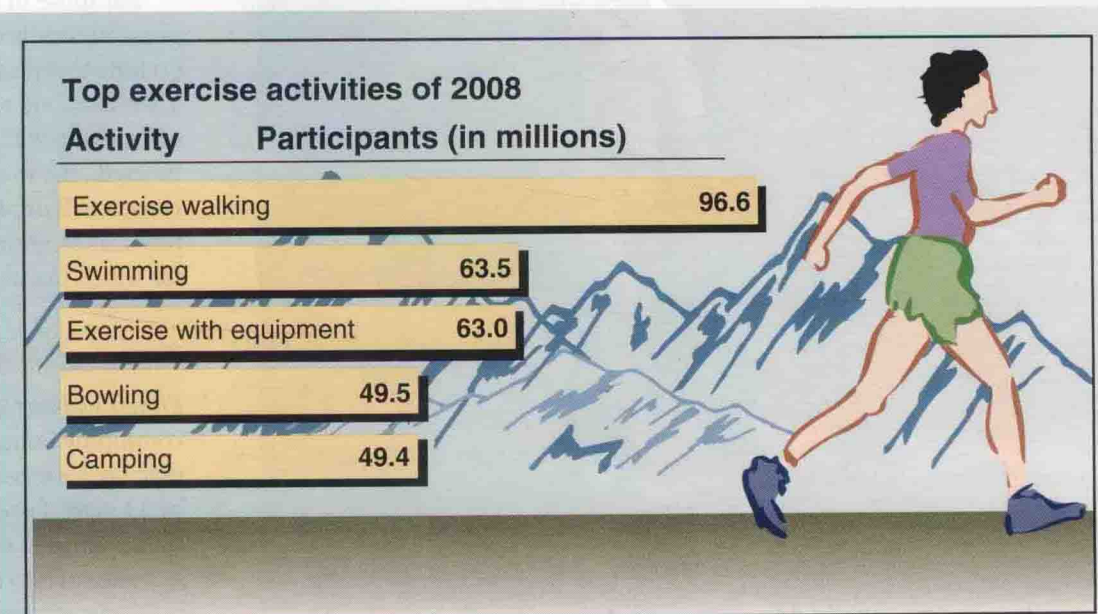


FIGURE 1.2 Walking: America's Most Popular Fitness Activity.

Type	Pace
Strolling	Less than 3 mph (20:00 min/mile)
Fitness walking	3–6 mph (12:00–20:00 min/mile)
Power walking	3–6 mph (12:00–20:00 min/mile) with exaggerated arm swing, hand weights or other external resistance, or both
Race walking	7.5 mph (8:00 min/mile) or faster using prescribed race walking technique

**FIGURE 1.3** Types of Walking.

of exercise. These and other factors have elevated walking to “most popular fitness activity” status in America.

## Types of Walking

Not all people who walk do so for their health. Many simply walk for the fun of it, for the sheer enjoyment of getting outdoors into the fresh air. While all walking is beneficial, the pace and regularity of one's walking will determine the extent to which desirable fitness

improvements are likely to occur. Therefore, it may be helpful to take a look at the various types of walking one may choose to do (Figure 1.3).

### Strolling

*Strolling* is the term most often used to describe casual walking. Generally done at an easy pace of slower than 3 miles per hour (20 minutes per mile), strolling is great for a person who is recovering from illness or who wishes to begin a walking program after having been sedentary for quite some time. Regardless of the purpose, strolling is most effective when it is done at a pace that will allow walking nonstop for 30 minutes or longer.

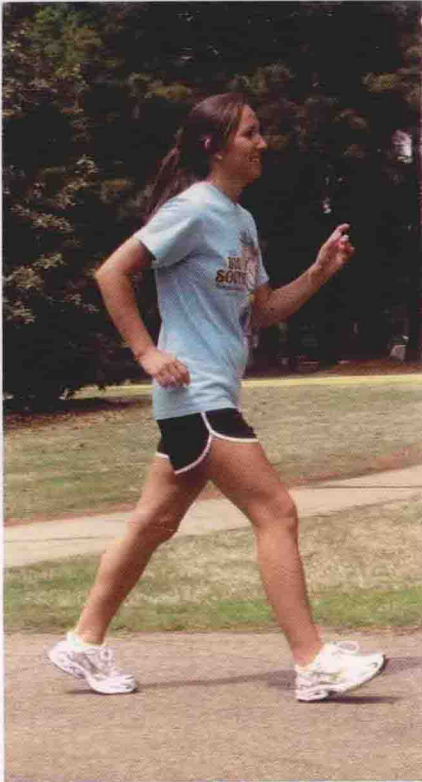
For those in reasonably good physical condition, strolling will do little to enhance aerobic fitness. Therefore, one of the following types of “walking with a purpose” should be used. The specific type of walking chosen will depend on the walker's physical condition and the purpose for which the walking is done.

### Fitness Walking

*Fitness walking* is the type of walking commonly done to improve one's aerobic fitness level. It is characterized by a longer, faster, more purposeful stride and arm swing than strolling, at a pace of 3 to 6 miles per hour (10 to 20 minutes per mile). This pace is generally sufficient to elevate the heart rate to the desirable aerobic



**PHOTO 1.1** Strolling is casual walking, generally at a pace slower than 3 miles per hour.



**PHOTO 1.2** Fitness walking involves a more purposeful stride and arm swing.



**PHOTO 1.3** Power walking uses an exaggerated arm swing, hand weights, or both.

conditioning level and maintain it there throughout the walk.

### Power Walking

*Power walking* has been compared to cross-country skiing without the skis. While done at the same pace as fitness walking (3 to 6 miles per hour), power walking enthusiasts intensify the effects of the exercise by using exaggerated arm swing and hand weights or other external props, or both.

### Race Walking

Despite its somewhat odd appearance, *race walking* is basically just an accelerated form of normal walking in which speed is the main goal. Race walkers are primarily competitive athletes whose technique must comply with specific rules of the sport. Race walking is typically done at a pace of 7.5 to 9 miles per hour (6.5 to

8 minutes per mile). A detailed discussion of various walking techniques is presented in Chapter 5.

## Summary

More health-conscious today than in years past, Americans are exercising in greater numbers than ever before. Health-related fitness is a combination of aerobic (cardiorespiratory) fitness, muscular fitness (flexibility, strength, and endurance), and body composition.

Because of the serious threat that cardiovascular disease continues to pose, aerobic fitness may be called the most important single health-related fitness component.

Therefore, it is important that you engage in regular aerobic exercise, and fitness walking (3 to 6 miles per hour) is one of the most popular and enjoyable of all aerobic activities.





Of all exercise, walking is the best.

Thomas Jefferson

**T**hroughout the history of sport, fitness, and play, people have searched for “the perfect exercise”—that single activity that will provide maximum health benefits in a wide variety of specific areas while, at the same time, being convenient, inexpensive, safe, painless, and, above all, fun.

Today, Americans are jogging, swimming, skiing, bicycling, dancing, and, yes, walking their way to better health. All of these popular activities are excellent choices for improving aerobic fitness. Each one, when done for 20 to 30 minutes or longer within one’s target heart rate range (see Chapter 4), three to five times per week, will lead to an improvement in aerobic fitness. However, if there is one single form of aerobic exercise that deserves the title “nature’s most perfect exercise,” it just may be walking. For, while many activities can be both fun and effective for improving one’s fitness, few can rival walking for its appeal to people of all ages, convenience, expense, safety, and enjoyment.

# 2

## Walking: Nature’s Most Perfect Exercise

### Practical Advantages of Walking

#### Walking Can Be Enjoyed by People of All Ages

Few exercise activities are appropriate for children, young adults, and senior citizens alike. Unlike jogging, running, bicycling, and sports activities like basketball and tennis, walking does not require specialized skills that are not easily mastered by young children. Therefore, a child can begin enjoying the many benefits of walking at an early age—literally, when he or she learns to walk. On the other end of the spectrum, because of its high degree of safety and universal enjoyment, walking is the most popular fitness activity among senior citizens. It is safe to say that walking is probably the only type of exercise that may be enjoyed from ages 2 to 102.



**PHOTO 2.1** Walking can be enjoyed by people of all ages.

### Walking Can Be Done Virtually Anytime, Anywhere

Walking is surely the most convenient of all exercise forms, since it can be done with little or no special considerations of time or location. For some, a brisk walk in the cool of early morning is the perfect way to start a day, while for others, the peace and solitude of an evening walk provides much-needed relief from the rigors of a busy day. For many whose mornings and evenings are filled with other activities, the lunch hour or other break times during the day provide excellent walking opportunities. Also, walking can be enjoyed in almost any location. The morning and evening walkers may get special enjoyment from walking in a scenic public park or may simply prefer to walk the streets and sidewalks of familiar neighborhoods.

One of the more recent creative innovations of some fitness walkers is mall walking, or walking in the comfortable, safe environment provided

by large shopping malls. This option is especially popular in areas where a lack of secure neighborhood streets or unfavorable environmental conditions (extreme hot or cold weather) makes outdoor walking difficult. In some cities, malls open their doors early in the morning to allow walkers use of the mall prior to the opening of the stores, and some even support the formation of mall walking clubs. For the employee who finds lunch hour the best time to walk, sidewalks, parking lots, and even long corridors may be better places to walk.

### Walking Is Inexpensive

One of the most common reasons cited by people who do not exercise regularly is the cost of exercise equipment, clothing, and spa or club membership fees. With the exception of a good, comfortable pair of shoes, walking requires very little monetary investment. To paraphrase a familiar sales pitch, walking is an activity that can be enjoyed for only pennies a day.

### Walking Is Less Likely to Result in Injury Than Most Other Forms of Exercise

One of the most appealing aspects of fitness walking is that it is virtually injury-free. Because one foot is always in contact with the walking surface, less stress is placed on the weight-supporting structures of the feet, ankles, knees, hips, and lower back. While it is undoubtedly true that higher-intensity activities such as running and aerobic dance may yield fitness benefits at a faster rate than walking, these activities are also much more likely to result in injuries that may cause a person to give up exercising altogether. (Specific suggestions for preventing and managing exercise-related injuries are presented in Chapter 8.)



**PHOTO 2.2** Mall walking has become a popular activity.

exercise and fun are mutually exclusive words; in other words, they are convinced that exercise simply cannot be enjoyable. One of the most exciting facts about fitness walking is that it is fun.

Whether done at a leisurely pace to simply unwind from a busy day or “walking with a purpose” to develop aerobic fitness or control weight, in the stillness of the early morning or the cool of the evening, with a group of friends or alone, walking can be fun.

### Walking Is a Great Fitness Activity

In addition to being a safe, inexpensive, and enjoyable form of exercise, walking is simply a great way to develop and maintain overall fitness. A regular walking program that includes appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities can positively influence four of the five major components of health-related fitness identified in Chapter 1—aerobic fitness, flexibility, muscular endurance, and body composition. Few fitness activities can make that claim.

## Myths and Misconceptions About Walking

Few of us can remember a time in our lives when we did not know how to walk. Consequently, like eating and breathing, walking is something most people take for granted. It should not be surprising, therefore, that some may view the very suggestion of walking as a fitness activity with a great deal of skepticism. As with most issues concerning fitness, the facts about walking as a beneficial and enjoyable fitness activity are often distorted by myths and misconceptions. The following are some of the most common erroneous beliefs of walking critics.



**PHOTO 2.3** Other than a good pair of shoes, no special equipment is needed for walking.

### Walking Is Painless

Despite what many people believe, exercise does not need to be painful to be beneficial. For too long, fitness enthusiasts have rallied around the cry “No pain, no gain.” While the basic idea that exercise benefits are not realized without physical effort is accurate, the implication that physical effort must be painful has discouraged many a potential exerciser from enjoying the many benefits that regular exercise has to offer. When the body hurts, it is simply sending a message to slow down, and, if these messages are ignored, injury may result. Therefore, the fitness walker would do well to adopt a more sensible motto—“Train, don’t strain.”

### Walking Is Fun

It is commonly estimated that fewer than 4 of every 10 adult Americans exercise regularly. A wide variety of reasons explain why most Americans choose not to exercise, not the least of which is that many believe that