

MOVE TO BE STRONG!



VON SMART NEWSLETTER



MAY 2024

Spring is a time for new beginnings and fresh starts; it can be a time of reinvention and new routines. The month of May plays host to many notable causes and awareness initiatives such as Arthritis Awareness, Better Sleep, Mental Health Awareness, Women's Health Care, and National Walking Month. All are important causes and deserve a month to bring focus to each initiative however this month we would like to concentrate on the benefits of walking as a form of exercise and tool for healthy aging.

Walking is a great way to maintain flexibility, strengthen your muscles, improve balance and coordination (to help decrease your risk of falling), reduce anxiety and depression, and maintain general mobility. It can be done independently, or in a group setting; with minimal space (e.g. marching on the spot, walking the halls of your apartment building, etc.) or with lots of space (e.g. walking trails, walking tracks, etc.); it is an extremely flexible form of exercise that is available to many populations with minimal barriers.

We challenge you to make May a month of walking and urge you to incorporate a walk into your daily routine. Get up and get walking, enjoy the fresh air of springtime. Every step counts!

The VON SMART Program

Helping to keep our community dwelling older adults active, engaged and free from falls!

For more information about SMART exercise classes and fall prevention workshops please contact:

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-or-

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Walking Groups Have Many Health Benefits

<https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/full-article/es/walking-groups-health-benefits-378?hl=walking>

Background

Regular physical activity has many health benefits; however, the majority of adults are not active enough to gain these benefits. Walking is a moderate intensity exercise that is possible for most older adults to do regularly. Group walking has shown to be an enjoyable, inexpensive way for older adults to increase their physical activity which is social and easy for people to continue in the long term. No research review has assessed the wider health benefits of walking groups.

How the review was done:

The studies included 1843 adults (average age 58 years). Fifteen studies focused on older adults.

Key features of the studies were:

- Majority of participants had health conditions (including arthritis, dementia, diabetes, fibromyalgia obesity, mental health issues, Parkinson's disease)
- Walking intensity varied from low to brisk and high-intensity
- Researchers measured changes in physical health and fitness, quality of life and depression as well as adherence to the program and negative side effects.

What the researchers found:

- Walking groups significantly improved blood pressure, heart rate, body fat, body mass index, cholesterol, fitness, quality of life and walking speed. Risk of depression was also lower among participants. 75% of participants in walking groups completed the entire program and there were no notable negative effects. Future studies evaluating the benefits of walking groups in healthy adults and the optimal intensity and duration of walking groups are recommended.

Conclusion

Walking groups provide a wide range of health benefits in adults and may be a practical way to encourage physical activity.

Why Choose Walking?

The human body was designed for movement and as we age it is imperative that we keep our bodies moving. The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for adults 65 years or older recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity per week. Walking can be classified a form of physical activity, and has many health benefits including but not limited to:

- Strengthen your muscles
- Strengthen your bones, and prevent osteoporosis and osteoarthritis
- Help reduce blood pressure in some people with hypertension
- Lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, colon cancer and diabetes
- Keeps your joints flexible
- Improve your balance and coordination, and decrease your fall risk
- Improve your energy levels and increase your stamina
- Reduce anxiety or depression
- Improve your social life – walking is a great way to get out and meet people or socialize with your friends

Although walking is an excellent form of cardio and balance training, it should not be the only form of exercise included in your daily routine. It is also recommended to practice strength training at least twice per week. Gather your fitness friends and head out for a walk! **How many walks can you do this May?**

Sources:

- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/Walking-the-benefits-for-older-people>
- <https://csepguidelines.ca/guidelines/adults-65/>



VON SMART Turns **30!**

Highlights from VON SMART's History

1994

- First senior's wellness class developed by VON Middlesex Elgin (Ontario) in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA)
- Other VON sites in southern Ontario also develop volunteer/peer lead seniors' wellness programs

2002 – 2004

- VON Canada's application to the Population Health Fund of The Public Health Agency of Canada is successful, granting a national pilot initiative to develop and implement seniors group wellness classes in three communities across Canada and to develop a Leading Practice Manual for use by other VON sites and the community at large

2004

- The Population Health Fund grants VON funding for the extension of activities to assist with site expansion and minimize wait lists as well as supporting national dissemination of VON Canada SMART Leading Practice Start-Up
- VON Canada develops a partnership with The Feeling Better Program (volunteer delivered in-home exercise program)

2005

- VON Canada is successful in their province-wide application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation which will support *The Functional Fitness Continuum Initiative* (to implement In-Home and Group Programs)

2009

- First Community Group Classes and In-Home Program launched in Chatham-Kent

2011

- SMART In-Home Program expands to include Sarnia-Lambton
- Accreditation Canada recognizes VON SMART with a Leading Practice Award

2013

- April: Planning starts to bring Community Group Classes and In-Home Programs to Windsor-Essex
- September: Ministry of Health introduces VON SMART Group Program to 75 retirement homes in Erie St. Clair LHIN

2014

- Begin offering classes in French to the Francophone community in Pain Court

Present

- Over 255, and growing, VON SMART group exercise classes per week across Erie St. Clair
- Serving over 3,500 participants weekly
- 50 Fall Prevention education and training workshops annually

JOIN US FOR WALKING WEDNESDAYS IN MAY AS WE CELEBRATE NATIONAL WALKING MONTH!

Throughout the month of May, the VON SMART Program will be hosting Walking Wednesdays in Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, and Sarnia-Lambton. We hope you will join us for a walk.

Call Melissa to register: 519-254-4866 ext. 6236
(Please note walking times vary by location.)

Where are we walking?

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024

- **Ojibway Nature Centre AT 10AM (Windsor)**
(5200 Matchett Rd., Windsor, ON)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

- **Ganatchio Trail AT 10AM (Windsor)**
(Sandpoint Beach Parking Lot)
- **Be-Fit Trail AT 11AM (Chatham)**
(232 Chatham St. South, Blenheim, ON)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024

- **Jackson Park AT 10AM (Windsor)**
(125 Tecumseh Rd. E, Windsor, ON)
- **Amherstburg Navy Yard AT 10AM (Amherstburg)**
(268 Dalhousie St. Amherstburg, ON)
- **Centennial Park AT 1PM (Sarnia)**
(430 Front St. N., Sarnia, ON - meet at the flag poles)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2024

- **Riverfront Trail AT 10AM (Windsor)**
(Riverside at Campbell Parking Lot – meet at the elephant sculpture)
- **Lakeside Park AT 10AM (Kingsville)**
(315 Queen St. Kingsville, ON)

WHAT TO BRING:

- Running shoes
- Water bottle
- Walking aids (if required)
- Fitness friend



DO YOU KNOW ABOUT URBAN POLING?



WHAT IS IT?

Also known as “Nordic Walking”, Urban Poling involves using specialized walking poles for improved health and wellness! Often described as cross-country skiing without the skis.

BENEFITS OF URBAN POLING

- Muscle toning
- Calorie-burning
- Improved posture

10 REASONS TO TRY URBAN POLING

1. **It whittles your waist** - Your abs tighten each time you push off with your poles.
2. **Your knees and hips will thank you** - The poles let you offload weight from your hips and knees into your upper body.
3. **It revs up the calorie burning** - Research proves it over and over again: urban poling burns up to 20 to 46% more calories than standard walking. Wow!
4. **It sculpts your arms and shoulders** - Urban poling uses 75% of your muscles – especially those underused upper body muscles.
5. **It helps balance your blood sugar** - The full-body urban poling workout helps keep blood sugars in a healthy range.
6. **You’ll straighten up and feel more confident** - Your upper back muscles (the ones that pull your shoulders back) tighten each time you plant your poles and press down on the ergonomic handles.
7. **It’s a fun, social workout** - Invite your friends, your parents & your kids to enjoy all the health benefits with you.
8. **It’s an amazing stress buster** - The smooth rhythmic action provides a distraction from everyday concerns and lifts your mood.
9. **You can adjust the intensity** - Urban poling is an energizing activity that can be enjoyed by people of any age and athletic ability. Just press on the ergonomic handles with more or less intensity to modify your pace.
10. **It’s a great running alternative** - Hit the trails or your neighbourhood sidewalks on your own or with a gang of friends.

DIFFERENT STYLES OF URBAN POLING

ACTIVATOR POLES

Designed for balance and taking more pressure off your back and lower joints. For use indoors as well as outdoors.

Suitable for:

- Hip/Knee Osteoarthritis
- Pre and post hip & knee replacement surgery
- Post spinal stenosis surgery
- Conditions affecting balance – Parkinson’s, MS, stroke
- Rehabilitation programs
- Older Adult Programs – minimizing the risk for falls



URBAN POLES FOR FITNESS

Designed to increase the intensity of your walk and turn it into a full body workout. Urban fitness poles burn more calories, tone your core and at the same time take pressure off your lower joints.

Versatile for:

- Hiking
- Winter walking
- Snowshoeing
- All seasons and terrain!

Source/for more information:

<https://urbanpoling.com/getting-started/>

