



Walking Program for Claudication

1. Claudication is the medical term for leg pain with walking due to circulation problems.
2. A walking program, when done regularly, will improve the ability to walk in most patients with claudication. It is also good for the heart, lungs, muscles, joints and it may prolong life. Please check with your medical doctor before beginning this program. Also, should you develop chest pain or shortness of breath, **stop walking and call your medical doctor immediately!**
3. In order to be effective, walking must be done regularly or at least every other day. Walking sessions should last a minimum of 30 minutes. Longer periods (45 or 60 minutes) may be even more effective. The length of time walking is more important than the speed or distance walked. Be consistent with the walking program. Walking every day for one week, then taking a week off will **not** be very effective. I suggest trying to make walking a part of your daily routine. This is often best done by walking around the same time each day, for example, after breakfast or before dinner.
4. Wear comfortable, well-fitting walking shoes or sneakers and socks. It is important to walk in a safe area and it is generally best done during daylight hours if outside. Avoid high traffic areas as drivers often do not notice pedestrians and stopping at traffic signals to cross busy streets will disrupt your walk. Walking is generally best when done on a flat dry surface. Avoid walking on slippery surfaces or when ice or snow may be in your path (see #6 below). Hills and steps will usually make walking more difficult. Treadmills are okay if available. Walk at a steady normal pace for you. By walking the same route(s) each day you will be able to judge distances better, as well as note at which point the discomfort begins. As time passes you will notice the distances you can walk without pain will increase.
5. Walk until you begin to feel the discomfort begin in the leg(s). If possible, walk with the discomfort until the discomfort requires stopping. Rest, stand or sit, until the discomfort is relieved, then resume walking. Do this as many times as necessary during your 30 - 60 minute exercise period. Initially, you may have to stop many times during the exercise period. With time you will notice that you will have to stop less and will be able to walk further without pain.
6. Have alternative "inclement weather" routes available to walk when Mother Nature does not cooperate. Long Island has many good indoor alternatives. Large shopping malls (Smith Haven Mall, Middle Country Road, and Lake Grove) or shopping warehouses (Costco, Middle Country Road, and Lake Grove) provide excellent heated or air conditioned environments. Many have benches available for sitting and resting. It is a good idea to avoid the busiest crowded times, often early morning just after opening is best.
7. Consistency is the key to success with any form of exercise. Improvement will be noticed in most cases; however, change does not occur overnight! Depending upon your degree of circulatory impairment, positive results will usually first be noticed one to three months after walking exercise is begun. Stick with it and good luck! If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call the office at (631) 246-8289.