

Beach Walk Workout

Everyone knows that walking is a great way to stay in shape, but why not maximize your results and enjoy yourself with this Beach Walk Workout?

Also walking on sand takes more effort than walking on pavement, so when you hit the beach, you burn calories faster than when you take a neighborhood stroll. And sand is easier on joints and bones than sidewalks are. You can get to that 200-calorie goal in 35 minutes, with less wear and tear.

You may think that dry sand is easy on your joints because it is soft and giving. It is not.

When you step down on sand, your feet sink below a level surface, and your joints, especially your ankles and knees, have to work extra hard to lift your foot up and out for the next step.

Definitely try to avoid walking on dry sand for extended periods of time if you aren't very fit or have any chronic ankle, knee, or lower back problems.

Do your beach walking along the edge of the shoreline where the sand is firm and wet. Your feet will still sink down to some extent — not enough to stress out your joints, but just enough to make your workout more strenuous.

- First 5 minutes: To warm up, walk on wet sand near the water's edge at a pace that allows you to talk and breathe comfortably.

- Next 4 minutes: Speed up to a brisk pace so that you're breathing more deeply. You should still be able to talk in full sentences but not as comfortably as during the warm-up. For the last 90 seconds of this segment, work up to a pace at which you're covering more ground and your breathing is labored. You should be able to speak only in short sentences.

- Next minute: Move to softer, drier sand and slow your pace slightly to allow yourself to speak more comfortably. Walking in soft sand boosts calorie burn and tones calves and thighs,

but it also can increase the risk of ankle sprains. (If you have weak ankles, stay on harder sand for this segment.)

- Next 20 minutes: Go back to the darker, harder sand and spend 4 minutes walking at the brisk pace from the earlier 4-minute segment. Next, walk on softer sand at a slightly slower pace for 1 minute. Alternate between the two terrains.

- Last 5 minutes: Stroll at a pace that allows you to carry on a conversation comfortably.

Beach Walking Tips:

Follow these tips to steer clear of accidents and injuries while you're getting a workout on the sand.

- Slip on the right shoes. Wear reef-walkers, athletic sandals or lightweight walking shoes. Although it's tempting to go barefoot on the beach, you need to support your feet and protect them from broken shells and glass and other sharp objects.

- Limber up your joints. Before starting out, warm up with gentle ankle rolls—draw imaginary circles in the air with each foot 10 to 15 times in each direction. Also, slow your pace when walking on softer, deeper sand to guard against ankle injuries.

- Practice safe sun exposure. Slather on an SPF 30 sunscreen with UVA/UVB protection, even if the sky is cloudy. Reflection off the water and sand can increase your chances of sunburn. Reapply sunscreen frequently, especially if you've been sweating or you've just come out of the water. Don't forget these easy-to-overlook spots that come to your attention only after they are burned to a crisp: your ears, in between your toes, along the edges of your bathing suit, and the back of your knees and neck.

- Wear a hat and sunglasses to protect your face from UV rays. Such protective gear lessens the possibility of wrinkling and premature aging of your skin and also helps reduce your risk of skin cancer.

- Avoid walking during the hottest part of the day, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Plan your beach walk around the sunrise or sunset to avoid heat-related complications.

- If you do a lot of beach walking, consider purchasing a pair of aqua shoes. Several companies make a special shoe for walking on wet surfaces. Large shoe companies make an aqua sock or slipper that is made of a quick-dry nylon mesh; these also have extra-good traction to prevent slipping and sliding.

- Be sure to drink plenty of water. In bright sunlight, you will dehydrate much more quickly than usual. And you'll dehydrate even more quickly if you walk seaside, thanks to the salty air.

Bring along a water bottle and sip it frequently as you stroll. Keep it in your ice chest under a shady umbrella between walks.

- If you are using your everyday walking shoes to walk on the beach, make sure that you dry them thoroughly and take great pains to remove every grain of sand from the inside of them. Remove the insoles and brush them vigorously. One unfortunately placed grain of sand can cause skin irritation, blisters, and discomfort.

- Finally – Bring a friend. We all know it's more fun to workout with your friends