

VASCULAR WALKING PROGRAM

General Information

With peripheral arterial disease (PAD), your leg pain can limit your ability to walk and decrease your quality of life. It may be difficult to go grocery shopping or walk from a parking lot. You may be thinking, “If I can’t walk from my car to the shopping mall without leg pain, how could I be in a walking program?”

- Research indicates that most people, after just six weeks of being in a walking program, have a 100 to 300 percent improvement in the distance they can walk before having leg pain. (This leg pain is known as intermittent claudication.)
- According to the American Heart Association, exercise therapy is the best treatment for claudication.

Before the Procedure

Here are the steps to begin your vascular walking program:

1. Choose possible locations for walking:
 - Medical fitness center affiliated with your local hospital
 - Outside sidewalks and paths (avoiding hills and slopes)
 - A track at a nearby school
 - A treadmill
 - Shopping mall
2. Begin a slow warm-up walk for five minutes.
3. Continue to walk at an increased pace. If pain begins, try to walk at least 30 to 40 yards more. Stop when the pain becomes severe. Record the number of continuous minutes you were able to walk.
4. Stop, remain standing and rest, until the pain lessens. This is a key part to your circulation and symptoms.
5. Resume walking until you must stop and rest. Continue this pattern until you have added up to 30 to 35 minutes of walking time. This does not include resting time.
6. Try to begin this walking program with a walking speed of two miles per hour (mph). Two mph is a speed where you can walk a quarter mile (four blocks) in 7.5 minutes. If you cannot walk that fast, do not worry. Next time, try a little faster until you are able to go two mph. If you are able to walk two mph or faster right away, that’s great.
7. Progression:
 - Walk every day if you can, or a minimum of four days per week.
 - Week 2: add five to 10 minutes over the course of that week; total 40 minutes.
 - Week 3: add five to 10 minutes; total 50 minutes.
 - Week 4: add five to 10 minutes; total 60 minutes.
 - Continue with 60 minutes for five to seven days each week.
 - Once you have reached the 60 minutes of walking time, increase your walking pace (how fast you go).