



**Mount
Sinai
Health
Partners**

Claudication Walking Program (Outdoors)

Patients who have intermittent claudication can benefit from a regular walking program. Studies have shown that regular exercise, particularly walking, can improve your symptoms of leg pain.

Follow these steps and call your primary care doctor if you have any questions or concerns.

- Perform warm up and cool-down periods of 5-10 minutes each. This includes stretching legs, calves, and upper body. Begin walking slowly, and gradually build up your pace.
- Begin walking at a pace fast enough so that you have to stop at about 2 blocks. Stop walking completely and stand when the pain or discomfort is **3-4 on the claudication scale**. The discomfort should disappear within 1-2 minutes. Once the pain (discomfort) goes away, walk again at the same pace. Continue this stop/start for a total of 45 minutes (including stopping time) for 5 days a week.

Claudication Scale:

1. No pain
 2. Onset of claudication (pain, discomfort)
 3. Mild pain or discomfort
 4. Moderate pain or discomfort
 5. Severe pain or discomfort
- **If you can walk more than 3 blocks** without having to stop, increase your walking pace so that you get discomfort at 2 blocks. In other words, if your legs usually start to hurt after walking 3 blocks walk faster so you have to stop at 2 blocks.
 - This walking program needs to be done at least 5 times a week for 45 minutes (this includes the stopping time) in order to be effective. Do not force yourself to walk with severe pain.
 - Studies have demonstrated that many patients can increase their walking distance up to 8-10 fold if they walk as explained above.
 - Call your primary care doctor with any questions.



**Mount
Sinai
Health
Partners**

Claudication Walking Program (Outdoors)

Summary of Walking Program

- Step #1** Stretch your leg and back muscles for 5 minutes
- Step #2** Walk at a pace fast enough so you have to stop at around 2 blocks. You should stop walking when reaching 3-4 on claudication scale.
- Step #3** Stop walking completely and stand until the discomfort goes away.
- Do not slow down, but stop completely.
 - Do not walk to the point of severe pain.
- Step #4** Repeat this cycle of walk/stop/walk/stop for 45 minutes
- Step #5** When you are finished walking, spend 5 minutes cooling down and stretch your leg and back muscles.

Tips for Success

1. Once you can walk 3 blocks without much discomfort, increase the pace of your walking so you have to stop 2 blocks. By constantly stressing the system, you will get the maximum benefit.
2. Walk for 45 minutes (including rest stops) at least 4-5 days a week.
3. Do not walk beyond 3 or 4 pain or discomfort.
4. **This works if you do it.**

Program developed by:

Jeffrey W. Olin, D.O., F.A.C.C.; F.A.H.A.
Professor of Medicine (Cardiology)
Director, Vascular Medicine
Zena and Michael A. Wiener Cardiovascular
Institute and
Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis Center for
Cardiovascular Health

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
One Gustave L. Levy Place, Box 1033
New York, NY 10029

Phone: 212-241-9454
Fax: 212-241-5107
E-mail: jeffrey.olin@mountsinai.org