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walk it off— just in time for summer

4 weeks to a
beach-ready body

by Leslie Sansone

Summer's right around the corner, and you know what that means: tank tops, shorts and (worst of all) bathing suits. But it's not too late to get the body you want. Now's the time to enjoy some glorious weather by walking, which will trim and tone. All you need is 30 minutes, six days a week. Stick with it, and by this time next month you'll be a dress size smaller. ▶

your 4-week daily plan

Each day you'll follow the same plan (below), but the mini-intervals keep it challenging. Every few minutes you either rev up or slow down your pace. It's a trick that maximizes calorie burn throughout your walk.

3 minutes	Warm-up pace
2 minutes	Moderate pace
4½ minutes	Power pace
30 seconds	Speed pace
Alternate power pace and speed pace segments 4 times in a row, for a total of 20 minutes	
3 minutes	Moderate pace
2 minutes	Cool-down pace (This is the same as your warm-up pace)

the speed you need

Use this guide to figure out your perfect pace for each segment of the walk. Each one is tailored to give those pounds an extra push.

Warm-up pace is basically a gentle stroll. It raises body temperature slightly, making your muscles feel a bit looser and less stiff. (2.5 mph or 90 steps a min.)

Moderate pace should still feel comfortable, but more purposeful. Roll off the ball of your foot to propel your body forward. During this phase, your muscles are using more oxygen, which revs up metabolism and carries fluid into the joints. (3 mph or 108 steps a min.)

Power pace is brisk: You should feel challenged, but not exhausted. Now you're entering the high calorie-burning phase of your walk. (4 mph or 135 steps a min.)

Speed pace should be the fastest pace that you can manage to hold for 30 seconds. If you really want to boost your burn, you can break into a jog. (5.5 mph or 175 steps a min.)

keep it up all summer long

Whew, you made it! You're finally on vacation, looking good in that new swimsuit. But don't get too comfortable in your beach chair. Walking on sand is more challenging than strolling along a flat path, so it's easy to keep up your new fitness routine—and your new body—while you enjoy the scenery. Or, try one of these other fun surf-and-turf activities.

Playing Frisbee: 30 minutes burns 135 calories

Bodysurfing: 30 minutes burns 135 calories

Swimming: 30 minutes burns 270 calories

Bicycling: 30 minutes burns 360 calories

Counts based on a 150-lb woman.

For exclusive videos with Leslie Sansone, go to womansday.com/videos.

make it a team effort

Studies report that you're more likely to stick to an exercise plan if you have a workout buddy. Not sure how to pick the right partner? Seek out a friend who has similar goals and schedules. Some factors to consider:

- Are you both parents? What are your time commitments at home?
- Do you work similar hours? Are you both stay-at-home moms, or do you work full-time?
- How do your fitness levels compare?
- How far away do you live from each other? Is there a convenient place for you to meet for walks?

want an even bigger motivation boost?

Organize your own walking team to create a fun, competitive atmosphere. Here's how to put together a team.

Start advertising Make up flyers on your computer and distribute them at work, church groups, women's clubs, or PTA or homeowners' association meetings.

Get organized Designate a few walking areas for your team, like parks, trails or school tracks. Ask members to sign up for at least three group walks a week, and to record solo walks as well.

Plan a celebration After four weeks, present an award to the team member who has walked the farthest. You can also recognize the members who have been most successful at dropping pounds and inches. **wd**