

Charles County's Walking Guide

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	2
TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED	3
TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE 2 ND EDITION OF THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS	3
HEALTH BENEFITS OF WALKING	5
OTHER BENEFITS OF WALKING	6
THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO WALK	6
TIPS TO INCREASE WALKING	7
INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHILE THINKING ABOUT SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE	7
TRAIL ASSESSMENT	7
WALK AUDIT	9
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY	10
TIPS FOR PEDESTRIANS:	10
TIP FOR DRIVERS:	11
LOCAL RESOURCES	11
WALK MARYLAND DAY	11
LIST OF KNOWN WALKING/BIKING/RUNNING GROUPS IN CHARLES COUNTY	12
LIST OF ORGANIZED WALKS/5K'S	12
PLACES TO WALK IN CHARLES COUNTY	13
RESOURCES	14
ATTACHMENTS	14

OVERVIEW

Charles County's Walking Guide

The official state exercise for Maryland is Walking. Maryland is the only state so far to adopt a state exercise.

According to the Initiative for Bicycle and Pedestrian Innovation¹;

“Walking is the most basic form of all transportation modes and part of nearly every trip we make. Planning for pedestrians, including people who travel with the aid of wheelchairs or other mobility devices, is essential. Bicycling also holds tremendous potential to increase mobility options for the relatively short trips that make up the majority of our daily travel. In addition to increasing mobility options, walking and bicycling generate a range of health, safety, economic development, and environmental benefits.

Some of the benefits of walking and bicycling accrue directly to the individuals who choose to walk or bike. Walking or bicycling for transportation and recreation:

- Improves personal health
- Increases mobility and access, particularly for youth, older adults, the financially constrained
- Saves money on transportation
- Increases opportunities for social interactions
- Provides enjoyment

At the community level, enabling people to substitute active transportation trips for automobile trips has the potential to convey multiple public benefits such as:

- Increased transportation options
- Improved safety for all road users
- Reduced traffic congestion
- Improved access to public transit
- Decreased air, water, and noise pollution
- Support of climate change emission reduction goals
- Stimulation of the local economy
- Increased opportunities for tourism
- Revitalization of urban areas
- Decreased road maintenance costs

¹ Creating Walkable + Bikeable Communities; a user guide to developing pedestrian and bicycle master plans

Charles County's Walking Guide

- Avoidance of the high costs of roadway and/or transit capacity expansions”

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

The goal is for adults to get 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week. If you can't achieve 150 minutes per week right away, ease into it. You can work toward increasing your activity time as you get stronger and more confident.

The easiest way to start to reach the goal is walking. It is easy, free and does not require any equipment besides shoes.

If you have a chronic condition or a disability, check in with your healthcare provider to see what types of physical activity and amounts of time they recommend for you.

The bottom line is; move more and sit less.

TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE 2ND EDITION OF THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS²

1. The [second edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#) provides **evidence-based recommendations for adults and youth ages 3 through 17** to safely get the physical activity they need to stay healthy. There are new key guidelines for children ages 3 through 5 and updated guidelines for youth ages 6 through 17, adults, older adults, women during pregnancy and the postpartum period, adults with chronic health conditions, and adults with disabilities.
2. The new key guidelines for children ages 3 through 5 state that **preschool-aged children should be active throughout the day to enhance growth and development**. Adults caring for children this age should encourage active play (light, moderate, or vigorous intensity) and aim for at least 3 hours per day.
3. The **recommended amount of physical activity for youth ages 6 through 17 is the same**. Each day, youth ages 6 through 17 need at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity to attain the most health benefits from physical activity. Most activity can be aerobic, like walking, running, or anything that makes their hearts beat faster. They also

² Executive Summary-Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd Edition

Charles County's Walking Guide

need activities that make their muscles and bones strong, like climbing on playground equipment, playing basketball, and jumping rope.

4. The **recommended amount of physical activity for adults is the same**. To attain the most health benefits from physical activity, adults need at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, like brisk walking or fast dancing, each week. Adults also need muscle-strengthening activity, like lifting weights or doing push-ups, at least 2 days each week.
5. We now know about **more health benefits** from physical activity — and how Americans can more easily achieve them. The second edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans is based on the latest scientific evidence that shows that physical activity has many health benefits independent of other healthy behaviors, like good nutrition.
6. The first key guideline for adults is to **move more and sit less**. This recommendation is based on new evidence that shows a strong relationship between increased sedentary behavior and increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and all-cause mortality. All physical activity, especially moderate-to-vigorous activity, can help offset these risks.
7. We now know that **any amount of physical activity has some health benefits**. Americans can benefit from small amounts of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity throughout the day. The first edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans stated that only 10-minute bouts of physical activity counted toward meeting the guidelines. The second edition removes this requirement to encourage Americans to move more frequently throughout the day as they work toward meeting the guidelines.
8. New evidence shows that physical activity has **immediate health benefits**. For example, physical activity can reduce anxiety and blood pressure and improve quality of sleep and insulin sensitivity.
9. We now know that meeting the recommendations in the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans consistently over time can lead to **even more long-term health benefits**. (new benefits appear in bold with symbol *)
 - For youth, physical activity can help improve **cognition**,* bone health, fitness, and heart health. It can also reduce the risk of depression.
 - For adults, physical activity helps prevent 8 types of cancer (**bladder**,* breast, colon, **endometrium**,* **esophagus**,* **kidney**,* **stomach**,* and **lung***); reduces the risk of **dementia*** (including **Alzheimer's disease***), all-cause mortality, heart

Charles County's Walking Guide

disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and depression; and improves bone health, physical function, and quality of life.

- For older adults, physical activity also lowers the risk of falls and **injuries from falls**.*
- For pregnant women, physical activity reduces the risk of **postpartum depression**.*
- For all groups, physical activity reduces the risk of **excessive weight gain*** and helps people maintain a healthy weight.

10. New evidence shows that physical activity can help **manage more health conditions** that Americans already have. For example, physical activity can decrease pain for those with osteoarthritis, reduce disease progression for hypertension and type 2 diabetes, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, and improve cognition for those with dementia, multiple sclerosis, ADHD, and Parkinson's disease.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF WALKING³

- Lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, dementia and Alzheimer's, several types of cancer, and some complications of pregnancy
- Better sleep, including improvements in insomnia and obstructive sleep apnea
- Improved cognition, including memory, attention and processing speed
- Less weight gain, obesity and related chronic health conditions
- Better bone health and balance, with less risk of injury from falls
- Fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Better quality of life and sense of overall well-being

OTHER BENEFITS OF WALKING⁴

- Safety-Walkable neighborhoods have much lower rates of traffic fatalities for pedestrians and motorists
- Social Equity

³ American Heart Association

⁴ America Walks-20 Years of Making America a Great Place to Walk

Charles County's Walking Guide

- Transportation-One quarter of all trips in the U.S. are 1 mile or less, and yet most of these trips are taken by car – increasing walking reduces traffic congestion and the cost of road maintenance
- Economic- The average household cost to own and operate one car in the U.S. is \$9,000 per year – walkable neighborhoods allow families to own fewer cars and save money.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO WALK

Recommendations for optimal safety:

- Visibility (see surroundings, see other people, have others able to see you)
- Be aware if the area has reliable cell phone reception/service
- Parking (well lit and specific for walking area)
- Clearly marked paths/trails
- Separated from vehicle traffic (barriers, curbs, grasses)
- Minimal trespassing and loitering
- Paths are well maintained
- Signage warning of incline or walkability level
- When possible, try to always walk with a partner

Other amenities to be aware of when planning a walk:

- Picnic area
- Close Bathrooms
- Cell Phone Service/Reception
- Paved/Unpaved
- VanGo accessible
- Seating along trail/path
- Picnic areas
- Playground
- Water available
- Fitness stations
- Pet friendly
- Community sports field
- Scenic area
- Fishing
- Horseback riding
- Biking

TIPS TO INCREASE WALKING

- If you commute, get off one stop early and walk the rest of the way.

Charles County's Walking Guide

- While shopping, park in the furthest parking spot.
- While shopping, take several laps around the store, before you begin shopping.
- If possible, walk instead of drive to run errands.

INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHILE THINKING ABOUT SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE

TRAIL ASSESSMENT

Information provided by

The trail assessment process was designed to provide objective information to help users determine the appropriateness of a trail. This process includes precise measurements of the trail, including exact distance, grade, width, obstructions, and cross-slope. Other information provided includes rest points, water fountains, water crossings, restrooms, and other hazards.

The following items should be considered when completing a trail assessment to include people with disabilities:

- **Trail Distance:** exact measurement of the trail, in feet.
- **Average Grade:** the amount of increase or decrease in terms of percentage of the whole trail.
- **Maximum Grade:** the maximum grade in percent that is reached for any 10-foot section on the trail.
- **Average Cross-Slope:** the average degree to which the trail slopes from one edge of the trail to the other edge.
- **Maximum Cross-Slope:** the maximum degree to which a 2-foot section slopes from one edge of the trail to the other.

Charles County's Walking Guide

- **Tread Width:** the usable portion of the trail bed. This is measured in inches over the total trail.
- **Trail Bed Zone:** covers the area that most people would identify as part of the trail. This includes roots, ruts and rocks.
- **Overhead Obstructions:** are obstructions in the trail bed zone that are 80 inches or more above the zone (Beneficial Design, 1999).
- **Minimum Clearance Width:** the minimum amount of usable trail space around an obstruction, such as a rock, root or rut.

Surface characteristics are important to identify the type of surface that makes up the trail. These are classified into five categories:

- **Paved** - firm, stable, slip-resistant, concrete, asphalt, and brick.
- **Hard** - firm, stable, not necessarily slip-resistant; examples include hardened soil and soil with stabilizers.
- **Firm** - when walked on with a shoe, no footprint is left but the surface is not stable. Examples include gravel mix and packed dirt.
- **Soft** - when walked on, a footprint of no more than 1/2-inch is left. Examples include soft dirt, wood chips and loose gravel.
- **Very Soft** - when walked on a footprint of 1/2-inch or more. Examples include mud, sand and loose pea gravel.

**Example of signage that could be placed at the beginning of each trail

WALK AUDIT⁵

Who Can Conduct a Walk Audit? Anyone

⁵ AARP

Charles County's Walking Guide

Many communities are created for the automobile. A lack of sidewalks and crosswalks and high traffic speed can make it unsafe or difficult for people to walk. You can make your community more walkable by conducting a walk audit to identify the roads and intersections that are dangerous for pedestrians.

Reasons to Conduct a Walk Audit?

- It can help create a pedestrian-friendly environment
- It increases exercise opportunities for your communities
- It boosts social interaction among neighbors
- It enables people to get around without having to drive
- It can help reduce traffic congestion and pollution
- It can lead to increased property values

Walk audit toolkits can give you step by step instructions for the leader and volunteers. Visit AARP.org/walk-audit to download the toolkits.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Look Up. Look Out. Stay alert, walk smart and drive smart. The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration's (MDOT SHA) pedestrian safety campaign

Charles County's Walking Guide

includes both drivers and pedestrians, because pedestrian safety is a two-way street. Pedestrian safety is an issue that affects the entire community; young and senior, drivers and walkers, in the day and at night. On average, more than 100 pedestrians are killed each year in Maryland. Most of the incidents are preventable.

TIPS FOR PEDESTRIANS:

- Use sidewalks and marked crosswalks whenever possible.
- Press the pedestrian signal button and wait for the walk signal.
- Always stop at the curb and look left, right and left before crossing a street.
- Watch for cars turning in or leaving driveways.
- Wear light or bright colored clothing.
- Pay attention and take off headphones while walking – no texting or playing games.
- If walking in the early morning or dusk, wear reflective gear or a light so that vehicles can see you.
- Drink plenty of water before and after walking
- Wear sunscreen
- Wear sturdy shoes

TIP FOR DRIVERS:

- Always stop for pedestrians.
- Follow traffic signs, signals and markings.
- Don't run red lights.
- Observe posted speed limits. Speeding only makes it more difficult to stop for pedestrians.
- Keep your eyes on the road. It's illegal to use a handheld phone/device or text while driving.

LOCAL RESOURCES

WALK MARYLAND DAY

Walking is Maryland's official state exercise. Walk Maryland Day is a celebration that takes place in October every year. All Marylanders are encouraged to take time that day to participate in some form of physical activity like walking.

Charles County's Walking Guide

Walking Leaders host walks in their community, workplace, place of worship, etc, and they encourage others to join them on those walks. You can host multiple walks or just one, and these walks can be of any distance or time of day. Becoming a Walking Leader is easy. Just fill out the registration form [here](#), afterwards we will post your walk on our website, and all you have to do is encourage others to join you. As a Walking Leader you have access to our promotional materials that you can customize to promote your walk in your community. In 2018, we had over 100 Marylanders become Walking Leaders. Come join us in the fun and become a Walking Leader today!

LIST OF KNOWN WALKING/BIKING/RUNNING GROUPS IN CHARLES COUNTY

- Strollercise-Charles County Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Program
- Mom's Groups
- Mall Walkers Program-Participants walk as much as they like in the mall's secure, well-lit, and climate controlled environment. Free blood pressure screening and health information is available on site. Monthly guest speakers keep walkers up to date on the latest health topics. St. Charles Towne Center, Monday-Friday, 8:00-9:30 a.m., Please register in the food court. **Contact;**Carol Pyle, Community Outreach Coordinator
Email: Carol.pyle@medstar.net
Call: [301-374-9098](tel:301-374-9098)
- [Girls on the Run](#)- Girls on the Run inspire girls to recognize their inner strength and celebrate what makes them one of a kind. Trained coaches lead small teams through our research-based curricula which includes dynamic discussions, activities and running games. Over the course of the ten-week program, girls in 3rd-8th grade develop essential skills to help them navigate their worlds and establish a lifetime appreciation for health and fitness. The program culminates with girls positively impacting their communities through a service project and being physically and emotionally prepared to complete a celebratory 5K event.
- Oxon Hill Bike Club
- Cancer Survivor Groups, Pink Ladies
- High School Cross Country Groups

LIST OF ORGANIZED WALKS/5K'S

Charles County's Walking Guide

- Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics
- Youth Triathlon-July at St. Charles High School
- Alzheimer's Walk-September at the La Plata Town Hall
- Out of the Darkness Walk-September at the Charles County Department of Health
- 9-11 Memorial 5K Road Race and Fun Walk in honor of Kris "Romeo" Bishundat, USN-September at Thomas Stone High School

PLACES TO WALK IN CHARLES COUNTY

a. Indian Head Rail Trail Entrance Points

- i. Mattingly Ave.
- ii. Indian Head Ave.
- iii. Blair Rd.
- iv. Woodland Dr.
- v. Arthur Ross
- vi. Route 225
- vii. Route 224
- viii. Bumpy Oak Rd.
- ix. Pomfret Rd.
- x. Bensville Rd.-parking available
- xi. Middletown Rd.
- xii. Theodore Green Blvd.-parking available

TRAIL HEAD MILEAGE CHART

	Mattingly Ave	Indian Head Ave	Blair Road	Woodland Drive	Arthur Ross	Route 225	Route 224	Bumpy Oak Road	Pomfret Road	Bensville Road	Middletown Road	Theodore Green
Mattingly Ave	0	0.23	0.66	1.05	1.21	2.65	3.23	5.54	7.00	9.09	11.04	13.00
Indian Head Ave	0.23	0	0.43	0.82	0.98	2.42	3.00	5.31	6.77	8.86	10.81	12.77
Blair Road	0.66	0.43	0	0.39	0.55	1.99	2.57	4.88	6.34	8.43	10.38	12.34
Woodland Drive	1.05	0.82	0.39	0	0.16	1.60	2.18	4.49	5.95	8.04	9.99	11.95
Arthur Ross	1.21	0.98	0.55	0.16	0	1.44	2.02	4.33	5.79	7.88	9.83	11.79
Route 225	2.65	2.42	1.99	1.60	1.44	0	0.58	2.89	4.35	6.44	8.39	10.35
Route 224	3.23	3.00	2.57	2.18	2.02	0.58	0	2.31	3.77	5.86	7.81	9.77
Bumpy Oak Road	5.54	5.31	4.88	4.49	4.33	2.89	2.31	0	1.46	3.55	5.50	7.46
Pomfret Road	7.00	6.77	6.34	5.95	5.79	4.35	3.77	1.46	0	2.09	4.04	6.00
Bensville Road	9.09	8.86	8.43	8.04	7.88	6.44	5.86	3.55	2.09	0	1.95	3.91
Middletown Road	11.04	10.81	10.38	9.99	9.83	8.39	7.81	5.50	4.04	1.95	0	1.96
Theodore Green Blvd	13.00	12.77	12.34	11.95	11.79	10.35	9.77	7.46	6.00	3.91	1.96	0

Distance from parking at Village Green to Mattingly Avenue is .47 miles. Mile 13 ends in the trail parking lot on Theodore Green Boulevard. Trail mileage may slightly vary depending on type of measuring device used.

- b. Westlake walking path
- c. Tilghman Lake Park to Laurel Springs-connects, 4 mile loop, 6 exercise stations, bathrooms
- d. Laurel Springs
- e. Rosewick Rd.
- f. St. Charles lake
- g. Gilbert Run
- h. Pisgah Park
- i. Western Parkway
- j. Piney Church Rd.
- k. Smallwood State Park
- l. Port Tobacco River Park/Tom Roland Natural Resource Area (7685 Chapel Point Rd., Port Tobacco)

Charles County's Walking Guide

- m. Mall-Indoors
- n. Capital Clubhouse
- o. Oak Ridge Park (13675 Oaks Road, Hughesville, MD)
- p. Friendship Farm Park-(4705 Friendship Landing Rd., Nanjemoy)
- q. Mallows Bay

RESOURCES

[Move Your Way](#)

[Rethinking Streets](#)

[Safe Routes to Parks](#)

[United States Access Board](#)-Accessibility Guidelines for Trails

[Beneficial Designs](#)

[Walk Maryland](#)

Printable [Safety Tip Cards](#), MDOT

[Physical Activity Guidelines](#), health.gov

[AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit](#) (and Leader Guide)

ATTACHMENTS

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd Edition, Executive Summary

Walkability Checklist

Charles County's Walking Guide

This guide is brought to you in community partnership:

Get Out and Move More



Follow us at: facebook.com/walkcharlescounty

