

## **Getting on a Treadmill**

by the American Institute for Cancer Research

People who engage in some sort of physical exercise on a regular basis—either through their occupation or leisure time activities – are likely to live longer and healthier lives. To lower your cancer risk, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) advises aiming for an hour of moderate activity each day and an hour each week of vigorous activity.

Walking is one kind of moderate activity. And a treadmill allows you to walk or run indoors at home or at a gym safely no matter what the weather is like. Gyms are usually open for long hours, so you can go when your schedule permits. Or you can step on a treadmill whenever you want by purchasing one for your home.

### **Make the Right Step Forward**

Walking or running on a treadmill is a form of aerobic exercise. Aerobic activities use the arm and leg muscles and give the heart and lungs a continuous workout. With regular progressively harder aerobic exercise your heart can grow stronger and more efficiently supply oxygen-rich blood to your body.

Before starting any new exercise routine, check with your doctor. Then keep these tips in mind as you prepare to use a treadmill.

- Before you mount the treadmill belt, experiment with the controls. Play with the belt speed and incline. Test the emergency off button. Keep in mind that raising the incline more than 10 percent may strain your back or leg muscles. Expensive treadmills may also have preset programs that change belt speed and elevation to mimic a hilly path outdoors.
- Warm up at a slow speed. Begin walking at 2 to 2.5 miles per hour for a few minutes. Then increase your speed to 3 to 3.5 miles per hour for a more challenging workout, if appropriate for your fitness level.
- As you walk or run, keep your shoulders back and chin up. Don't look at your feet.
- Relax and take normal strides as you would on the ground.
- Pay attention to where you are on the treadmill. Don't veer to either side or fall too far back.
- As a beginner, keep your treadmill workout simple until you are accustomed to the equipment and know your endurance levels for time and speed. Treadmills usually have small screens that display your speed, time spent treading, total distance and approximate calories burned. You can use these numbers to gradually increase the difficulty of your treadmill workout.

*To obtain an activity journal so you can record your treadmill statistics and work on improving them, call AICR at 1-80-843-8114, ext. 111 and asking for Making Strides: A Journal for Physical Activity.*