***Simple Steps to add quality to your walking***

* **Katy Bowman, MS is a biomechanical scientist says OVERUSE OF TREADMILLS AND ELLIPTICALS CAN LEAD TO DECREASE OF BONE DENSITY, YUP, THAT IS RIGHT YOU DID NOT READ THAT WRONG! This freak me out I hope to trade in my treadmill for a cross country ski machine for winter, otherwise I plan to just keep with my walking program!**
* **Get your posture centered**: **Envision the spine is the center of it all. Now imagine the crown of your head lifting upwards, ears, shoulders, hips and ankles would all follow the plumb line of the body.**
* **Your body should be as weight bearing as possible, use minimal knee bend:**  **to reduce the overworking of hip flexors and strain to knees.**
* **Tone the back side while you walk**: **focus when walking on the “push off” of the foot from behind, strengthening the most neglected body parts, hamstrings and buttock muscles. (They are weak, because we sit on them most of the day!) One way to do this is to envision your cross country skiing or ice skating while walking. No more hamstring curls needed on the weight machine!**
* **You may need to change the way you walk completely! Step so you land using the whole foot, Instead of leading with the heel**- **The goal is to get your legs underneath your pelvis.** **What this does is line up the pressure from sole of foot to the hip, instead of overloading the already super tight hip flexors, and placing stress on the knees.**
* **Tone the abdominals while you walk! Think of keeping your pelvis centered, this will automatically engage the transverse abdominals. In order to maintain a centered sacral position, you must use the lower abdominal muscles. Notice if your sacrum is tilted forward when you walk and correct this alignment in order to work your core muscles while you walk.**
* **Swing your arms while you walk, this leads to body symmetry, and increased blood flow to the upper body.**
  + - * *Avoid doing the following*
* **Do not leading with the heels,** if you lead with the heel when the foot strikes the earth, the ankle, knee, hip, shoulder will not be aligned, it’s as if your torso is behind your feet. The results is strain to the joints
* **Avoid: Overarching the low back,** think neutral pelvic bowl
* **Avoid: Overly sucking in the gut. (I was really happy to find out this was not so good for us) This cuts off oxygen and blood supple to the key organs of the body, leading to lack of oxygen, tension, constipation, low back pain, due to tension in the gut. Instead of sucking in the gut, use your transverse abdominals to stabilize the pelvis to neutral.**
* **Avoid Rounding the upper body,** Think shoulders over hips
* **Avoid Dropping the head down,** Keep your eyes forward

*aDD MEDITATION TO YOUR WALK*

**Meditation Walk –** **Let your mind become clear and walk and repeat a mantra. (Soo.. hum..) Universal mantra: The Soham mantra has been called the universal mantra because of the fact that its vibration is already a part of the breath, and everybody breathes. *Sooooo...* is the sound of inhalation, and *Hummmm...* is the sound of exhalation**

**Emotional healing Walk**: Use your walk to ease the stress of the day, imagine your breathing in clean air an out the stress of the day, if your emotionally upset, imagine as you breath out, you remove the anger, irritation and frustration from your heart, you can keep the attention on the heart as you breath in and out.

**Contemplation Walk**: If you’re struggling with problem, one of the best ways to gain clarity is to quiet and clear the mind. Before starting pause and take a moment to form a question in your mind. (I would like clarity on the following situation\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ . Close your eyes and take a few conscious breaths, allow the issue to be released, clearing the mind and begin to use the meditative walk. . You might be surprised that answers will come spontaneously.

* *HAPPY WALKING!!*