

Capital Region Walking Guide





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The Benefits of Walking: *Health, Community, and Environment*

For Your Health

As one of the most accessible forms of exercise, walking provides an amazing amount of health benefits.

1. Walking helps you stay strong and fit.
 - It helps increase bone density, improves joint health and increases muscle strength.
2. Walking can also:
 - Increase your energy level
 - Improve your ability to cope with stress, depression and anxiety
 - Increase your brain power
3. Want lower health care costs? Walking and being more physically active:
 - Reduces your risk of cancer
 - Decreases your risk of a heart attack
 - Cuts your risk of a stroke in half
 - Reduces your risk of Type 2 diabetes
4. Consider a pedometer

Walking 30 minutes a day cuts diabetes risks and reduces the risk



Pedometers track the number of steps you take. By counting the steps your daily activities already provide, you can set goals, monitor progress and stay motivated.

For Your Community

Walking is a great way to connect with neighbors and get to know your neighborhood. Discover pocket parks, local shops and interesting architecture.

A neighborhood where people walk is a place where people are watching out for each other.

For the Environment

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the Capital Region. Walking helps to reduce roadway congestion and cuts back on vehicle idling.

If the average American walked to work or to shop just once every two weeks instead of driving, close to 1 billion gallons of gasoline pollutants would be prevented from entering the atmosphere every year.

-Commuterchoice.harvard.edu

Accessorize for Exercise

Shoes, Rain Gear, and More

Shoes

A good pair of walking shoes makes exercise and neighborhood jaunts more enjoyable.

- Stability, cushion, a flexible sole and plenty of toe room are good places to start when seeking out new shoes.
- Bring an old pair of shoes in when purchasing your new pair. Most salespeople can give you recommendations on what to buy based on the wear of your old shoes.
- Waterproof and water-resistant walking or running shoes are available to keep feet dry in the rain, but rubber or leather boots and some wool socks will also do just fine.

Rain Gear

- Rain protection can be basic like a poncho or more complex like a jacket with venting and waterproof zippers.
- Waterproof fabrics are better for hard rain – water resistant ones are fine in drizzle.

A good goal to work towards for improving health is 10,000 steps per day, which is about five miles. Start out slowly, and watch your steps increase weekly.

Get Walking!

How and Where to Fit in Walking

The easiest way to get started is to walk somewhere you were headed anyway.

To work

Try walking to or from work. If it seems a little far, ride transit and get off a few stops early, or park farther away and walk the last half mile. Allow a little extra time for the first few days of adding walking to your commute.

At work

- Have walking meetings with coworkers. Touch base on projects while you work.
- Don't use the restroom down the hall – find one on another floor and walk there.
- Have an office on the 6th floor? Take the stairs. Challenge your co-workers to join you on your break to walk down and back up.

To school

Start by walking once a week or a few times a month first, then add more days as the going gets easier. Get together with families in your neighborhood and split up the leader responsibilities with other parents.

Walking errands

Check which of your destinations is within one mile. One mile is only twenty minutes on foot. Get both your daily recommended exercise AND the errands done.

Be Creative

A “penny walk” is where you take off from home and plan not to return until you find a penny. That’s one idea – can you think of more ways to roll exercise, adventure, and fun into one?

More than one = fun!

Ask family members, neighbors, or friends to join you. It’s fun to walk with someone and share both the experience and benefits.

Be Seen: Increase your visibility

- Light or bright colored outerwear helps other road users see you better. Garments with reflective striping are also helpful.
- When looking to buy an umbrella, consider a lighter color like white or bright yellow to be more visible to other road users.
- Decorate your clothing, backpack, pet’s leash, and umbrella with reflective tape.
- Attach flashing lights to zippers, pockets, or a pet’s leash or collar. Flashing lights are sold with bicycle gear.



Reflective Tape can be purchased at large department stores, sporting goods stores, and/or craft stores.

Lighten Your Load

A personal, foldable shopping cart may be what you need when a load gets too heavy.

A great option for grocery, laundry, and other shopping trips on foot, they are easily paired with transit if a destination is farther than your walking distance.

Know Your Streets in New York State

Types of Legal Crosswalks

- Crosswalks exist as the continuation of sidewalks across any public street intersection, including at a “T” intersection, whether marked on the pavement or not.
- Crosswalks can also exist between intersections (mid-block) but only if they are marked, usually with white paint.

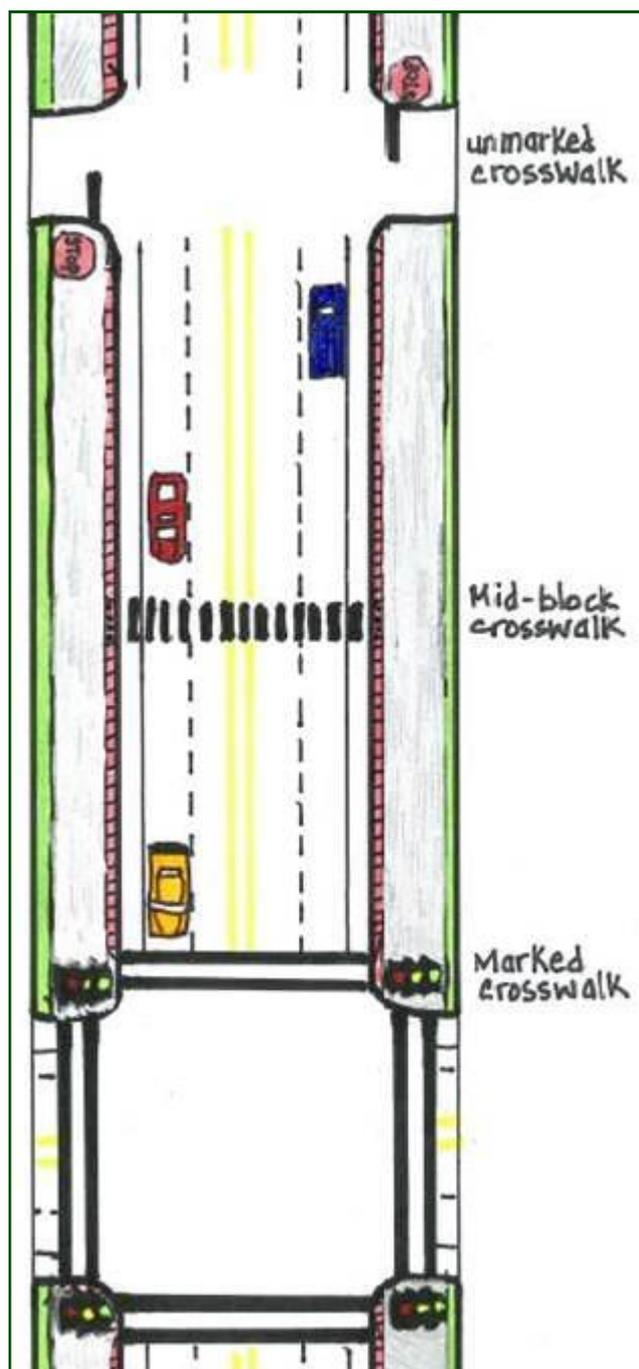
Crossing the Street

Pedestrian Protections

- At unsignalized intersections and roundabouts, drivers must yield to pedestrians crossing the roadway in legal crosswalks.
- At signalized intersections with no pedestrian signals, pedestrians may cross on a solid green light only. Turning vehicles must yield to pedestrians.
- At signalized intersections with pedestrian-control signals, pedestrians must follow those signals.

Pedestrian Responsibilities

- Before crossing, pedestrians should show intent to cross by extending part of their body or other item such as a shopping cart, cane, or bicycle, into the roadway.
- Pedestrians must not suddenly dart in front of moving vehicles. At an intersection with sidewalks but no traffic signal, a pedestrian has the right of way, but not if a vehicle is already too close to yield. Buses and trucks take longer to stop than a car.
- When crossing an intersection with no signal, no sidewalks, and no marked crosswalks, pedestrians must yield to vehicles.

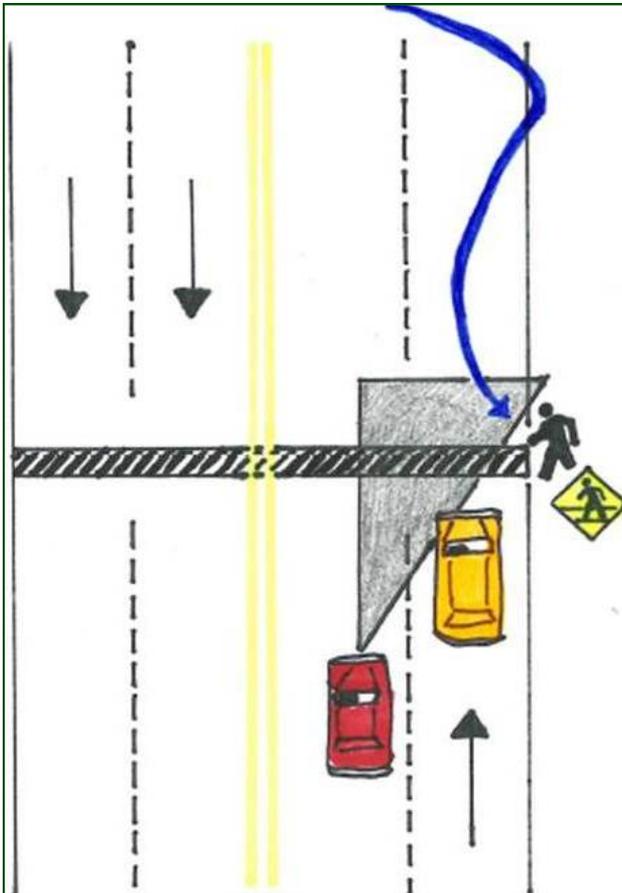


The Double Threat

In New York, when one vehicle yields to a pedestrian in a crosswalk, no vehicle may pass that vehicle on either side.

A “double threat” can occur at mid-block crossings on streets with two or more lanes of vehicles traveling in the same direction. If one vehicle yields to a pedestrian and another vehicle passes it on either side, the pedestrian may not be visible and can be hit.

When crossing streets such as this, a stopped vehicle may block you from the view of other vehicles. Before entering the next lane of traffic, STOP and look to make sure all approaching vehicles have stopped for you before crossing the next lane.



Know Your Signals

Pedestrian Control Signals



Or



Walk across. Watch for turning and oncoming cars.



Or



Don't Start Crossing! Continue to cross when the symbol is flashing. Numbers may show the seconds remaining.



Or



STOP! The light is about to turn red.

Countdown Crosswalk Signals

Countdown signals give pedestrians information about how much crossing time remains to finish crossing the intersection. Like the signals listed on the previous page, once the red hand flashes, it is not safe to begin crossing the street. Finish crossing if you have already started. Once the red hand stops flashing, there are about 3 seconds before oncoming traffic receives a green light.



Pedestrian HAWK Signals

(High-Intensity Activated crossWalk):

HAWK Signals help pedestrians safely cross busy streets. While different in appearance for motorists, for the pedestrian, this signal works like other push-button activated traffic signals by stopping traffic with a red signal, allowing pedestrians to cross with a WALK signal.



Tips for Walking and Running

- Use sidewalks if provided and safe to do so. Plus, it's the law.
- Be alert, especially for turning vehicles.
- Travel against traffic when sidewalks aren't available. Walk on the shoulder or as close as you can to the roadway edge. Beware of corners with little to no visibility.
- Make eye contact with drivers when possible.
- Look left, right, then left again, and over your shoulder for turning vehicles before crossing,
- Wear bright contrasting clothes after dark and in bad weather.
- Be smart. Drugs and alcohol impair judgment; be smart about how you use them.
- Minimize distractions – Don't text while crossing. Turn down the volume on earbuds so you can hear traffic and other noise around you.

NYS - "Yield" to pedestrians

New York State law does not require drivers to stop for pedestrians.

Drivers must slow down, or stop **if need be**, for a pedestrian actually within a crosswalk to cross the driver's lane.

Multi-Use Paths

Such as the Mohawk-Hudson Trail and Zim Smith Trail

- Stay to the right so other users at faster speeds can pass safely on your left.
- When traveling in a group of three or more, remember to walk only two abreast so other users have room to pass.
- Listen up for bike bells or an “on your left” call. This can mean someone is passing or needs more room to do so. Pay attention so you can help everyone move smoothly.
- Turn down the volume in your earbuds. Make sure you’re still aware of other users and vehicles around you.
- Obey all trail and road signs, and use care where city streets intersect with paths.
- You have the right of way. As the slowest traveler on the path, runners and cyclists should yield to you.

Motorists and Cyclists must yield to a pedestrian with a white cane or guard dog who is crossing or attempting to cross the roadway at an intersection.

Petiquette

- Responsible pet ownership helps keep our city clean, green and safe.
- Leash your dog: Unleashed dogs can harm wildlife, natural breeding areas or be deemed a threat by other park, path, and sidewalk users. Many towns and cities in the region require dogs to be leashed.
- Scoop the Poop: Animal waste can contain harmful organisms that can live in the soil for long periods of time, can contaminate water and can be transmitted to humans and other animals.

Extend Your Trip with CDTA

If your destination seems too far to walk or bike, try CDTA, the Capital Region's public transit system. CDTA offers assistance and trip planning in person, by phone, on the web, and with Smartphones. Choose which works best for you.

Telephone Assistance

CDTA's customer service representatives provide arrival times and service alerts during business hours (M-F 6am-7pm; Sat 8am-6pm; Sun 8am-5pm).

482-8822

Travel Training

CDTA's travel trainers provide personal assistance to plan a trip including any transfers, read and understand route maps and schedules, pay the fare and purchase passes. By appointment.

482-8822

Website

Complete transit service information is available via the online trip-planner and the most up-to-date service map and schedules.

www.cdta.org

Google

Search for directions by transit (or walking) instead of car. Google frequently updates CDTA's data.

www.maps.google.com

Walking Maps and Guides

Capital District Regional Bike-Hike Map

Assists pedestrians and cyclists with both recreational and commuter trips throughout the Capital District. Online only

www.cdtcmpo.org/regbkmap.htm

Mohawk-Hudson Trail Maps

Mostly off-road between Schenectady and Albany along the Mohawk and Hudson. On-road in Cohoes and Watervliet. Call 458-2161 for a paper copy.

www.cdtcmpo.org/mhbkmap.htm

NYS Office Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation

Information and maps for exploring New York's State Parks.

www.nysparks.com

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Inventory and maps of publicly accessible NYS lands.

www.nysdec.ny.gov go to Outdoor Activities

Parks and Trails New York

Find over 100 multi-use trails in New York State.

<http://www.ptny.org/Trailfinder/index.shtml>

Google Maps

Locates efficient and safe routes or directions for pedestrians. Transit stops are marked.

www.maps.google.com

Walk Score

Shows the most and least walkable areas in your neighborhood, map your commute or find nearby shops and restaurants.

www.walkscore.com

Healthy Hearts on the Hill

Downloadable guide to the signed Underground Railroad and West Hill — Arbor Hill walking paths in Albany.

<http://www.ceacw.org/hhh>

Stockade Historic District

Cell phone walking tour in New York State's first historic district.

www.historicstockade.com



Organized Walks

American Volkssport Association

A nationwide grassroots network of about 300 active Volkssporting clubs. Site includes a list of organized walks throughout the Capital Region by the Empire State Capital Volkssporters.

www.ava.org / www.walkescv.org/

Historic Preservation Associations

A number of local historic preservation associations offer history-themed guided walks, usually over a couple hours for a small fee.

- Saratoga Springs – www.saratogapreservation.org
- Rensselaer County – www.rchsonline.org
- City of Albany – www.historic-albany.org
- Bethlehem – www.bethlehemhistorical.org
- Schenectady County – www.schenectadyhistorical.org

Saratoga PLAN

Organizes summer family trail walks in Saratoga County.



Route Mapping, Trip Logging and Walking Groups

www.iPool2.org



The Capital Region's easy-to-use ride-matching tool matches you with people going your way for work or play. Also log your walking, biking and transit commute trips to calculate your savings.

www.mapmywalk.com

Map your own routes, view distance and elevation information, and share with friends. Find runs and walks posted by other users and create your own training plans.

www.walkjogrun.net

A free and easy way to create walking routes or choose from others. Calculate distance and pace, track calories and log your walks with a free training diary.

www.walkscore.com

Take a step toward a walkable lifestyle by entering your home address to find your walk score and seeing what your neighborhood has to offer within walking distance.

www.walkers.meetup.com

Meet other local people interested in walking for fitness. Enter your zip code and find groups in your area.

Useful Resources

NYS Department of Transportation Capital Region Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator

John Franchini: 457-9983; john.franchini@dot.ny.gov

Capital District Transportation Committee Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator

Carrie Ward, Jennifer Ceponis Daley: 458-2161

cward@cdtcmpo.org; jceponis@cdtcmpo.org



Capital Coexist

Bicycle and Pedestrian education & safety information

www.capitalcoexist.org

Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force

CDTC is responsible for the Capital Region's long-range transportation plan as well as programming federal transportation funding. The Task Force meets monthly to share ideas and discuss regional bicycle and pedestrian topics.

www.cdtcmpo.org/bkpedtf.htm

