

February: the month of love and American Heart Month, so let's have a little heart to heart. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease according to the American Heart Association. Walking is a great, easy way to reduce your risk of serious diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and more. Additionally, research shows that taking a walk can be a great way to reduce stress! Not only are local parks and the Greenbelt great for those romantic walks, they are great places to get exercise and prevent heart disease.

This past November I was house sitting right up the street from my workplace, which was nice as I typically commute about 20 minutes each way. While I was house sitting, it was too close not to just walk to and from work each day. Every day I would walk 10 minutes to work, shuffle 10 minutes back to the house for lunch, stroll 10 minutes back to work and once again trek 10 minutes back to the house. This small change in schedule allowed me to get a total of 40 minutes of walking every day! Not only did I feel great exercising and walking, but I also found myself reflecting and enjoying my time outdoors (even when it was a mere 18 degrees outside).

Starting regular walks is easy! All you need is a pair of comfy sneakers. Experts recommend a 30 minute walk a day. If 30 minutes isn't possible, breaking it into 10-15 minute walks is perfectly acceptable as long as you're getting out there! Find an approach that fits you and your schedule and stick to it. It also helps to find the right place to take your walks. Some local locations that are great for walking include your favorite local park (like Guerber and Merrill), the Greenbelt along the beautiful Boise River, and the Eagle Sports Complex trails (just be cautious of cyclists). Another great tip for starting regular walks is to find a "sole-mate". Ask your significant other, a friend, or bring along your pet to help encourage you along the way. Spend some quality time with the ones you love while getting into shape.

So love your heart this Valentine's Day and this month by heading outside! Utilize the great free open space Eagle has to offer. For additional ways to get healthy this year, head to [www.cityofeagle.org/recreation](http://www.cityofeagle.org/recreation) to check out some great city-wide recreation programs. Remember to "enjoy Eagle everyday"!

Christina Coats  
Eagle Parks and Recreation, Administrative Assistant

Source: <http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>

