



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Walking For Health And Saving Lives

(NAPSA)—Exercising for good health and fitness can be as easy as putting one foot in front of the other—simply walking.

Walking is a great exercise option for every age and fitness level. Building stamina in time, distance and pace increases the positive aspect.

For thousands of people, walking for health has taken on a whole new meaning with distance walking—up to a marathon distance (26.2 miles) at a time. When walks raise money for charity, the benefits extend to saving the lives of others.

A very popular long distance walking event is the *Avon Walk for Breast Cancer* series. The non-competitive *Avon Walks* attract 2,000 to 4,000 people each, and offer a choice of walking a marathon (26.2 miles) or a marathon and a half (39.3 miles) over a weekend. The walks raise funds for access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer and have generated nearly \$60 million in the past two years for breast cancer research, clinical care, support services, screening and education.

With proper training, people of virtually any age and fitness level can take part in these walks.

“The sense of victory and empowerment from walking for a cause enhances the accomplishment in so many ways,” said Kathleen Walas, president of the Avon Foundation, which produces the walks.

For those who consider distance walking, there are important training tips:

Shoe Sense. According to the American Podiatric Medical Association, the ideal walking shoe should be stable from side to side and well-cushioned. For women,



Walking is great exercise and walking for a cause can make the reward seem even sweeter.

consider shoes from RYKÁ, performance athletic footwear with a narrower heel and wider forefoot. Wear thick or double-layer, lined non-cotton socks to help cushion the soles.

Stretch Your Muscles. “Health” magazine recommends a brief warm-up, walking in place and simple stretches before walking. Stop and stretch a few minutes every hour during your walk and do slow stretches after.

Hydrate! Walkers should drink 8-16 ounces of water per hour and drink before they begin walking. Sports drinks are essential during longer walks.

Dress for safety. Wear light-colored clothes so you are visible and dress for the weather, including sunscreen.

Walk smart. Obey the rules of the road. Watch out for hazards and be on guard for vehicles.

Women or men can register for any of the eight 2005 Avon Walk for Breast Cancer events by visiting www.avonwalk.org or calling 800-720-WALK.