

# Is Power Walking Still a Thing?

 [blog.myfitnesspal.com/algo.html](http://blog.myfitnesspal.com/algo.html)

April 19, 2017



by [Amy Schlinger](#)

April 19, 2017

While there's no exact point in time that marks when power walking started, or a precise definition, it's often referred to as aerobic or fitness walking, and it's a spinoff of race walking, which became an Olympic sport in 1904.

Lately, though, it seems power walking isn't as popular as it once was — or is it that when people say walking, power walking is just implied. We did a little digging and spoke to experts to get the lowdown on the state of power walking.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF POWER WALKING

Even before race walking, there was what we called pedestrianism. "Individuals would walk for distance or sometimes speed," says [Michele Stanten](#), American Council of Exercise board member, author of "Walk Off Weight." "It was a popular spectator sport in Europe back in the 1800s and early 1900s." Then came Volksmarches, explains Stanten, which were non-competitive distance walks, popular in the '60s, followed by the creation of charity walks in the '70s, where these events were used to help support a greater good. "The popularity of power

walking rose in the late '80s, early '90s," says Stanten. "It's actually even when I started walking along with running and aerobics."

There's not an exact definition or reason to explain the rise of power walking, points out Stanten. "During this time period, we all learned that exercise did not have to be extreme — we didn't all need to run 10Ks or marathons to have cardio fitness," says [Michele Olson](#), PhD, CSCS, an adjunct professor of sport science at Huntingdon College. "Walking, which is a very body-friendly form of cardio, was something anyone could do, and it was cost effective. The only type of equipment you truly need is a pair of quality exercise shoes."

---

**READ MORE > [WALKING WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AFTER THIS WEEKEND: INTRODUCING EVERWALK](#)**

---

## **POWER WALKING FOR FITNESS**

If done correctly, power walking counts for fitness — it can even be your sole form of exercise. Just try walking on a treadmill at 5 miles per hour for an extended amount of time without letting your form be affected. You need to have a fast gait and efficient movement, explains Olson, but that can be learned.

"Walking workouts often include interval and [fartlek training](#), where you speed up, go off-road, up and down hills, incorporate walking lunges, walk sideways and backwards," says Olson. "[Recent studies](#) even show that if you walk 15,000 steps a day you can stay fit, lose weight and fight off heart disease." However, most of these studies talk just about walking — not power walking. So is it just implied that you should be power walking, or is just plain walking enough?

## **IS POWER WALKING STILL A THING?**

From a public-health standpoint, the goal is to get all people moving, and even regular walking is a very good option for that. "That's where the focus has shifted — pedometers and the research on steps throughout the day have shown us that all walking counts," says Stanten. "But there are still reasons to promote power walking, especially to all the people who are already doing some walking."

In short, if you love power walking, you should power walk loud and proud. Trends may come and go, but anything that keeps us moving — and walking at any speed — is worth doing.

Save

About the Author

---

**Amy Schlinger**

Amy is a New York-based fitness and health writer and editor whose work has appeared in SELF, Men's Fitness, Shape, Muscle & Fitness HERS, Pilates Style, Max Sports & Fitness and more. Check her out at [www.amyschlinger.com](http://www.amyschlinger.com).

