



3RD ANNUAL SENIOR WALK

Seniors, want a great way to lose weight and top it off with a side of muscle tone and vigor? In an effort to introduce the senior community to the concept of mall walking, Councilmember Pete Constant is leading the charge to stay fit by putting one foot in front of the other during the 3rd Annual West Valley Senior Walk at Westfield Valley Fair on Friday, April 4, 2008 starting at Center Court inside the mall. Councilmember Constant seeks to emphasize the benefits of mall walking which include a safe, climate controlled environment and a level surface to exercise on with plenty of opportunities to socialize.

The label “senior citizen” has changed over the years with the help of better health care and extended life spans. It’s no longer expected that just because a person is retired or over fifty they need to confine themselves to a walker and lounge chair. Today’s mature adults have many options to stay fit and the best and least expensive way is to walk. According to Mature Fitness, published by the American Senior Fitness Association (www.seniorfitness.net), walking has a long list of benefits including enhanced weight loss, increased energy, improved fitness level, decreased stress and tension, improved muscle tone, increased ability to perform daily activities, decreased risk of age-related disease, improved cardiovascular health, and of course the undivided attention of your walking partner!

One of the best features of walking is the low cost of equipment. Layered clothing and good walking shoes are all anybody needs to start and succeed. If you’re out shopping for walking shoes there are a few features that are best to examine before purchasing. Mature Fitness recommends: Shoe uppers should be of high quality, breathable materials, such as leather. They should have a comfortable, padded heel collar with a firm heel counter (that cups the heel) to provide stability for the entire foot and leg. The entire sole should be designed to absorb shock with substantial arch supports. A rocker profile sole enhances a smooth heel-to-toe motion and the toe box should allow ample room without toes being too tight against any part of the shoe.

Before you begin your workout, try gentle stretching to help warm-up the muscles and get them ready to work. A few safe exercise practices to remember include obtaining medical clearance to exercise, stop exercising if you feel pain, always warm up and always cool down, and drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise. For a more complete list of safe exercise practices go to www.seniorfitness.net/safe.htm.

Now that you are fully prepped for the West Valley Senior Walk let's talk about the other great things to enjoy on April 4th. How about everyone's favorite word "free?" There will be FREE registration, FREE gifts generously donated by local businesses, FREE breakfast to give you the energy to walk, walk, walk, and a FREE informational fair. Informational booths at the event will focus on helpful tips for living a better life from organizations such as ActiveOver 50 Magazine, Breath California, The Health Trust, Office on Aging, San Jose Office of Emergency Services, Silicon Valley Council on Aging, and many others.

Blood pressure screening and body mass index calculations will also be offered at the event. A Kaiser Permanente physician will be available to talk to participants about preventative medicine and hot topics in senior issues. Outreach and Yellow Cab are offering seniors in need of transportation assistance a FREE ride to and from the Senior Walk. To reserve a ride you must call the District 1 office at 408-535-4901 by April 1, 2008.

Come learn the joy of walking, make some new friends and have fun while being fit! And if you enjoy the walk in the mall on April 4th why stop there? West Field Valley Fair Shopping Center has a growing number of unofficial mall walking groups meeting at the mall at 6 a.m., seven days a week, when the mall and Starbuck's coffee open. Join them rain or shine for a safe and healthy habit.