A walking routine can easily become stale (translation: you’ve stopped losing weight), and if that has happened to you, try ChiWalking. This new workout, created by fitness coach and author Danny Dreyer, is different from regular walking—you use your body more efficiently, burn more calories and tone your tummy as you move. To kick your weight loss into high gear, try our nutrition plan, with easy-to-make recipes you’ll love. In four weeks, you’ll look better, feel more energetic and drop as many as eight pounds. By Karen Asp

Slam down (by up to 8 pounds!) and boost your energy with a new way to exercise

What is ChiWalking?
It’s a technique based on tai chi, a Chinese martial art that uses flowing movements and breathing to direct chi, or energy, through the body.

Clear your mind
Many of the benefits of ChiWalking are mental. Try these tips to push away everyday concerns.

- Keep watch
  Look ahead as you walk, and focus on an object in the distance, such as a telephone pole or house. Keep it in your sights, trying not to avert your gaze. As you get closer to the object, find another point on the horizon to look at. This little trick gives you something to concentrate on and quiets your mind.

- Be aware of breathing
  Watch your breath as you inhale and exhale. Try it—you’ll be drawn into the rhythm of your actions and quickly shed the day’s worries.

- Say a phrase
  Repeat a word or sentence as you walk, such as “I am strong” or “I feel focused,” to help you remain calm and centered.
Learn the technique. Change the way you walk to improve your balance, get better muscle tone and walk longer distances faster.

1. **Align your spine**
   - With one hand on your lower belly, place your other hand under your collarbone and lift up gently. You will feel an upward stretch in your spine while lengthening the back of your neck. Think of yourself as a strong column, with an imaginary vertical line stretching from shoulder to hip to heel. **DON'T** throw your shoulders too far back or slump forward.

2. **Engage your abs**
   - Stand with feet a fist’s distance apart. Use your lower ab muscles to hold your pelvis so it’s horizontal to the ground. Think of your pelvis as a bowl of cereal—if you tilt it too far forward or back, the milk will spill. (The waistband of your walking pants should be parallel to the ground.) Keeping your lower abs contracted, shift your weight back and forth between your legs and notice how your pelvis doesn’t move from side to side. That’s how you should feel when you walk.

**Chi Tip**
- You take in more oxygen—and breathe more efficiently—when your spine is in line.

**Chi Tip**
- A slight forward lean helps your move fluidly, creating less impact.
Lead with your upper body
Hinge forward slightly from your hips and let gravity move you forward. Your upper body should tilt just enough to keep your shoulders over your hips. As you walk, keep your arms and body moving only in the direction you’re headed, without much side-to-side or up-and-down movement.

Move your arms
Bend your arms to 90 degrees and swing your arms back and forth along your body like a pendulum (see picture, left), focusing on the backward motion. Your hands should go back no farther than your lowest rib. The cadence of your arms should set your pace—move them faster if you want to walk faster. **DON’T** let arms dangle or swing wildly across your body.

Shorten your stride
Focus on extending the leg in back instead of reaching farther with the one in front. This reduces the strain on the knees, calves and shins. Pick up your feet and plant them firmly on the ground, rather than taking heel-to-toe steps. It’s correct if your legs are relaxed and your body is leaning forward slightly. **DON’T** step too far forward. Overstriding is the leading cause of injuries among walkers, says Dreyer.

Breathe correctly
As you exhale, flatten your belly and force the air out of your lungs through your mouth, as if you’re trying to blow out a candle. As you inhale through your nose, relax the abdominals and let your lower lungs fill with air.

Make chi manageable
Try concentrating on one technique per walk—such as the movement of your arms or engaging your abs—until you’re able to pull it all together.

Follow our four-week ChiWalking plan
Keep moving toward better health and a smaller dress size. Choose Level 1 if you’re new to exercise or Level 2 if you’re an experienced walker.

**Week 1**
**LEVEL 1:** Walk three times for 20 to 25 minutes at a moderate pace.
**LEVEL 2:** Walk four times for 30 to 35 minutes at a moderate pace.
**THIS WEEK’S FOCUS:** Posture
Channel your inner runway model and concentrate on walking with your head held high and your spine erect.

**Week 2**
**LEVEL 1:** Walk three times for 25 to 30 minutes at a moderate pace.
**LEVEL 2:** Walk four times for 35 to 40 minutes at a moderate pace.
**THIS WEEK’S FOCUS:** Core muscles
Do a slight crunch as you walk, this will help you walk with your body slightly forward and tone your tummy.

**Week 3**
**LEVEL 1:** Walk four times for 25 to 30 minutes at a moderate pace.
**LEVEL 2:** Walk five times for 35 to 40 minutes at a moderate pace.
**THIS WEEK’S FOCUS:** Arms
Bend your arms to a 90° angle. As you swing one arm back, the opposite hip goes back. Notice how your pace quickens with your arm movement.

**Week 4**
**LEVEL 1:** Walk three times for 30 to 40 minutes and one time for at least 45 minutes at a slightly faster than moderate pace.
**LEVEL 2:** Walk four times for 40 to 45 minutes and 1 time for at least 45 minutes at a slightly faster than moderate pace.
**THIS WEEK’S FOCUS:** Cardio
Choose one walk where you move quickly for 2 minutes, then moderately for 2 minutes. Continue this pattern several times before cooling down.
Try a mix-and-match diet plan

To estimate how many calories you need to lose weight, first multiply your weight by 15. To lose one pound per week while exercising 30 minutes a day, subtract 250 calories daily. (If you’re not exercising, subtract 500.) Next, choose a breakfast, a lunch and a dinner from the one-serving meals below. The combination of meals provides 1,300 calories; make up the rest of your calories with snacks and desserts.

**Breakfast**

**BREAKFAST BURRITO** Scramble 3 egg whites with ¼ cup frozen spinach (thawed) and ¼ cup sliced mushrooms. Top with 1 oz. shredded low-fat Cheddar; roll in a whole-wheat tortilla.

**POWER OATMEAL** Mix 1 packet unflavored instant oatmeal, ½ cup fresh or frozen (thawed) blueberries and 2 Tbsp. trail mix (with nuts, seeds and dried fruit); add hot water, mix well.

**SUPER SMOOTHIE:** Blend 1 cup soy milk, ½ cup frozen blueberries, ½ cup frozen mango, ½ tsp. ground flaxseed and 1 tsp. frozen spinach. Add 1 to 2 Tbsp. sparkling water, to taste.

**GREEK YOGURT AND FRUIT PARFAIT** Mix 8 oz. non-fat plain Greek yogurt with ½ tsp. honey and ¼ tsp. ground flaxseed. Layer with ½ cup blueberries, ½ cup raspberries, 1½ Tbsp. slivered almonds and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

**PEANUT BUTTER WAFFLE** Top 1 whole-grain waffle with 1 Tbsp. of natural peanut butter, 1 sliced banana, 1 tsp. honey and a sprinkle of cinnamon.

**Lunch**

**TUNA PITA** Mix 1 can water-packed tuna with 1 Tbsp. fat-free mayonnaise, 1 tsp. mustard and juice of 1 lemon wedge. Spoon into 1 whole wheat pita with lettuce, ½ cucumber (sliced), ½ tomato (sliced), pickle, 1 apple.

**GREEK COUSCOUS** Mix ½ cup cooked whole-wheat couscous with 1 cup microwaved broccoli florets, ½ cup chickpeas, ¼ cup sun-dried tomatoes, ¼ cup currants and 1 Tbsp. slivered almonds. Drizzle with 1 Tbsp. olive oil. Top with 2 Tbsp. nonfat plain Greek yogurt.

**LENTIL SOUP WITH CUCUMBER-TOMATO SALAD** Make soup: Mix 1 10.5-oz. can lentil soup with ½ cup cooked brown rice and ½ cup frozen spinach. Make salad: Drizzle 1 tsp. olive oil, 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar over ½ cucumber (diced) and ½ tomato (diced); top with 1 oz. reduced-fat feta.

**MEDITERRANEAN WRAP** Spread whole-wheat tortilla with 4 Tbsp. hummus and 1 Tbsp. black olives. Top with ½ tomato (sliced), ½ squash (sliced), ½ sliced zucchini, ½ sliced red pepper, 1 red onion slice, lettuce, ¼ avocado and 1 oz. reduced-fat feta. Serve with carrots and ½ cup grapes.

**Dinner**

**VEGGIE PITA PIZZA** Sauté 2 sliced garlic cloves, ½ small onion (chopped), 5 sliced mushrooms, and 2 cups fresh spinach in a pan misted with cooking spray. Toast 1 whole wheat pita; top pita with ½ cup spaghetti sauce, sautéed veggies, 2 meatless meatballs (microwaved and sliced), 1 Tbsp. sliced olives and 1 mozzarella stick (pulled apart into shreds). Place under broiler just until cheese melts.

**QUINOA WITH FRUITS AND NUTS** Mix ½ cup cooked quinoa with ½ cup chickpeas, 2 sautéed garlic cloves, 2 cups fresh spinach, 1 Tbsp. raisins, 1 orange (peeled and diced), ½ Tbsp. slivered almonds, 1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil, ½ oz. orange juice and 10 sprigs chopped parsley.

**RAVIOLI CHICKEN** Combine ¾ cup cooked veggie-filled ravioli, 3 oz. cooked and cubed (skinless and boneless) chicken breast, 2 sliced and sautéed garlic cloves, 1 cup steamed broccoli florets, 4 sliced mushrooms and ¼ cup sun-dried tomatoes. Top with ½ tsp. olive oil and ½ tsp. balsamic vinegar; toss and serve.

**Snacks and desserts**

- 15 pistachios
- ½ cup trail mix
- 20 small whole-wheat or spelt pretzels
- ¼ cantaloupe
- ½ cup baked tortilla chips
- with 2 Tbsp. salsa
- ¼ red bell pepper with 3 Tbsp. hummus
- 1 large celery stalk with 1 Tbsp. natural peanut butter
- 1 apple with 1 Tbsp. natural peanut butter
- 1 cup berries or mango
- 28 grapes
- 1 cup plain, non-fat yogurt
- 1 reduced-fat mozzarella cheese stick

*Source: Rima Kleiner, MS, RD, a Denver-based dietitian and wellness consultant*