



# 7 Common Walking Problems with Smart Solutions

*Transform Your Walk, Enrich Your Life*

by Dr. Suki Munsell, Ph.D., RSMT, RSME

The untapped power you possess! Of the 7.8 billion people on the planet, no one is exactly like you. You are unique - and that's more than a result of your genetics. Your choices become you - your identity, your self-image, and how you step forward into the world.

When you walk, your history walks with you. Past injuries, muscle memories, habits and stress - the twists and turns of your life - all walk along with you. They affect your thoughts and feelings, your vitality and confidence, and your outlook on life.

Your posture and stride not only influence how you feel, but also what you broadcast to others. Your conscious and unconscious self-expression - your body language - is recognizable a block away. Others pick up on your signals, just as you attune to them.

Read about the Seven Common Walking Problems and find the solutions you need. Discover the unconscious habits that rob your freedom. Transform your walk and enrich your life.



Published by  
Dynamic Health & Fitness Inc.  
[www.DynamicVitality.com](http://www.DynamicVitality.com)

Dynamic Health & Fitness, Inc.  
524 San Anselmo Ave, #222, San Anselmo, CA 94960

First Edition Publication Date: September, 2019  
© 2019 by Dynamic Health & Fitness Inc. All rights reserved

No excerpts permitted and or commercial distribution without written permission.

Contact info: [DrSuki@DynamicVitality.com](mailto:DrSuki@DynamicVitality.com)

**DISCLAIMER:** The information in this e-book is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for the advice provided by your physician or health-care professional. Do not use the information in this e-book for diagnosing or treating any health problems. Always speak with your physician or other healthcare professional before using any treatment for a health problem. If you have or suspect that you have a medical issue, contact your healthcare professional immediately. Do not disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking professional advice because of something you read in this e-book.



## About Dr. Suki Munsell

In 1975 Dr. Suki began training in dance and somatic movement therapy with dance pioneer Anna Halprin. (Suki recently celebrated her 45th anniversary of mentorship with Anna.)

After earning a Ph.D. in Movement Education with a dissertation on Body Transformation in 1981, Dr. Suki searched for an effective, simple, and practical method of personal transformation to teach her students. In the 1990's she developed Dynamic Walking which blended a somatic approach to the biomechanics of stride – with a touch of dance.

Her students' results encouraged her to continue improving the program over the next three decades.

By 2000, her Dynamic Walking program was serialized in Prevention Magazine and published in Prevention's Complete Book of Walking. Thousands of students worldwide walk pain free, with greater efficiency and ease, using Dynamic Walking, from which these Seven Common Walking Problems developed.

For more training, please visit our website and [get on our list](#) so you can learn about our Dynamic Walking online course.

## How to get the most out of this eBook.

1. **Be curious.** How many of the CWP can you discover in the world around you?
2. **Watch others.** Analyze walkers on the trail, shoppers at the grocery store, actors on TV.
3. **Experiment.** Try on different strides and notice what you feel - both physically and emotionally.
4. **Choose.** Practice several exercises and notice what changes.
5. **Transform.** Shift from your Old Walk to your New Walk every time you notice.

**Free your body to move with natural ease and grace.**





# Transform the 7 Common Walking Problems

*from...*

- |                            |           |                    |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. Weak Leg Support        | <i>to</i> | Strong Leg Support |
| 2. Over-striding           | <i>to</i> | Gliding            |
| 3. Poor Push-off           | <i>to</i> | Push-off Power     |
| 4. Twisted Gait            | <i>to</i> | Balanced Gait      |
| 5. Slumping                | <i>to</i> | Light and Lifted   |
| 6. Upper Body Leaning Back | <i>to</i> | Lifted and Aligned |
| 7. Forward Head            | <i>to</i> | Lighter and Taller |

*You have the power to choose  
and the freedom to change*

# COMMON WALKING PROBLEM #1

## Weak Leg Support to Strong Leg Support



## WEAK LEG SUPPORT

Your legs support the weight of your upper body. If your base is not strong, joints are strained, and unconscious tension creeps into your back, shoulders, and neck to compensate for subliminal weakness. Your hips and legs serve two functions; to hold you still (think brain surgeon), and to move you at a moment's notice (think sprinter). For joyful mobility, joints must remain aligned, flexible, and tension free.

## WARNING SIGNS

Poor posture, frequent ankle injuries, pain in knees, hips or low back, bunions, and uneven wear on the inside or outside of the soles of your shoes.

## THE PROBLEM

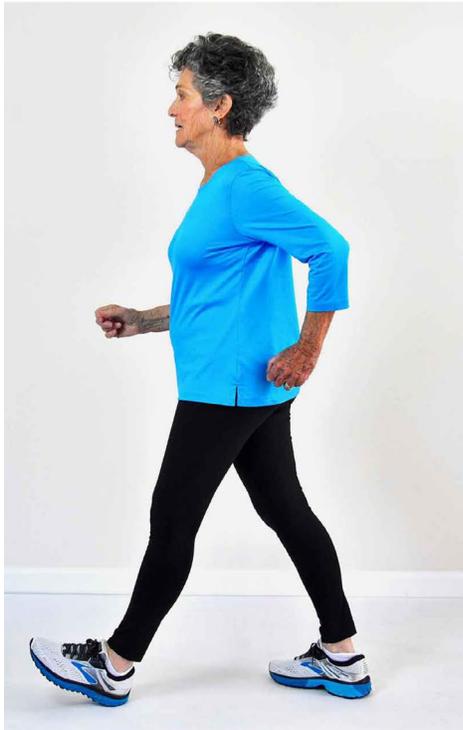
If your arches collapse in and downward (pronation) or your feet collapse to the outside, (supination), they are not supporting your knees which can twist inward (see photo) or outward. If you've ever wondered why one knee or hip needs replacement, its often due to lack of lower body alignment creating repetitive stress injuries over a lifetime with poor stride mechanics.

## THE SOLUTION

Just as a train must remain on its track to carry its load, knees must track over your feet and directly under hips, while walking and standing. *Ladder Legs*: Place your flat palms just to the inside of your hip bones. Look down, and in a mirror, to see if knees and feet are aligned. Bend knees and check for any collapse. *Heel Toe Roll*: Roll back and forth from heels to mid-feet to forefeet. Track knees over the center of feet. If knees fall in or out, place a yoga block between to maintain even pressure. Build strong support for Lifelong Legs.

## COMMON WALKING PROBLEM #2

### Over-striding to Gliding



### OVER-STRIDING

Over-striding describes the habit of taking too long a stride. I observe that one third of people over-stride when walking, especially when rushing. Their attention simply gets ahead of them. While over-striding looks energetic or might feel like a good cardiovascular workout, the long-term risks are the cumulative impact on joints. The solution is simple. Take shorter steps.

### WARNING SIGNS

A bouncy or noisy walk with heel, knee or low back pain that increases during or after walking.

### THE PROBLEM

A longer stride length creates shock and compression into the joints, especially the heels, knees and spine. Long-term repetitive stress injuries can lead to plantar fasciitis, knee pain, and low back pain.

### THE SOLUTION

*Build a Gliding Stride:* lengthen your stride for 15 seconds. Take long steps to exaggerate what you feel in your joints. Next, take tiny, tiny steps for 15 seconds and notice how that feels. Slowly lengthen your stride until you feel as if your torso is riding along on your moving legs - an easy, quiet gliding stride. Roll through each foot, from heel to toe. Repeat the exercise again to emphasize the difference. From too long a stride, to too short, then shift into your new gliding stride. Repeat whenever you notice your old stride returning. Note: marathon walkers use short quick steps!

## COMMON WALKING PROBLEM #3

### Poor Push-off to Push-off Power



### POOR PUSH-OFF

As the name implies, Poor Push-off describes not fully engaging your feet and legs to propel your body forward. The walk is often flat-footed without rolling from heel to toe. Poor push-off can result from either over-striding, leaning your torso slightly back or collapsing into your hips. More than 75% of people step forward rather than powering off from behind. Shifting to a more powerful push-off reinvigorates your whole body. You'll look and feel younger. You'll get more benefit from each walk.

### WARNING SIGNS

A flat-footed, slow walk with underdeveloped legs and buttocks can result in a tight painful low back. It's difficult to get a good work-out. You feel older than you are.

### THE PROBLEM

Muscles in your feet and calves help pump fluid up the legs and back toward the heart. Fluid more easily accumulates in the legs when not using a heel-toe-roll (which engages the plantar pump) or engaging the lower leg (the calf pump). When sitting too much, your hamstrings can become tight. A stronger push-off engages the buttocks and helps you avoid low back tension and pain.

### THE SOLUTION

*Build Push-off Power:* stand tall and lean forward 2 degrees from your ankles (not your hips!). As you lean you'll position your legs under you for greatest traction (shown by hula hoop) and you'll naturally engage your forward momentum. Roll through each foot and push-off beneath and behind you where you have the most Push-off Power.

# COMMON WALKING PROBLEM #4

## Twisted Gait to Balanced Gait



### TWISTED GAIT

A twisted gait occurs when the sides of your body are not working symmetrically. Examples include a stronger push-off from one leg, one foot that tracks outward at an angle, or an uneven thrust of one arm as it swings either forward, back, or crosses the body. Almost everyone has a dominant leg and arm. A little variance from your center line is part of your unique structure, but over time these unconscious habits further unbalance your body and accumulate stress.

### WARNING SIGNS

Signs include an uneven footfall sound, uneven shoe wear, socks or pants twisting when walking, an arm that swings more easily forward or back, or an overly dominant push-off from one leg.

### THE PROBLEM

An uneven leg push-off or arm stroke – repeated an average 6,000 steps a day – causes an unbalanced torque in the joints of your ankles, knees, hips and entire spine. Imagine walking a dog on a leash that keeps pulling to the side. It's a strain to walk forward on the path. You can compare this to when one foot points out at an angle. Muscles and joints must over-work to keep you walking straight.

### THE SOLUTION

Build a Balanced Gait: look down a moment when walking to see if one foot is angled outward. Next feel if one foot is pushing off harder or landing heavier. Then walk with one hand at your chest while you notice the power and tracking of your other swinging arm. Switch hands. Your goal is symmetry to decrease uneven stresses on your spine by matching the power and positioning (tracking) of your legs and arms, right to left sides.

# COMMON WALKING PROBLEM #5

## Slumping to Light and Lifted



## SLUMPING

Slumping describes a collapsed body that has lost its fight with gravity. Every step accumulates downward compression in tiny increments through thousands of steps every day. Slumping dampens your vitality and ages us prematurely.

## WARNING SIGNS

A heavy or slow walk, poor posture, spinal or joint pain, ribs grind on hips, difficulty breathing, impacted digestion and elimination.

## THE PROBLEM

All joints - feet, knees, hips and along the spine - are impacted by compression. Circulation to internal organs is decreased.

## THE SOLUTION

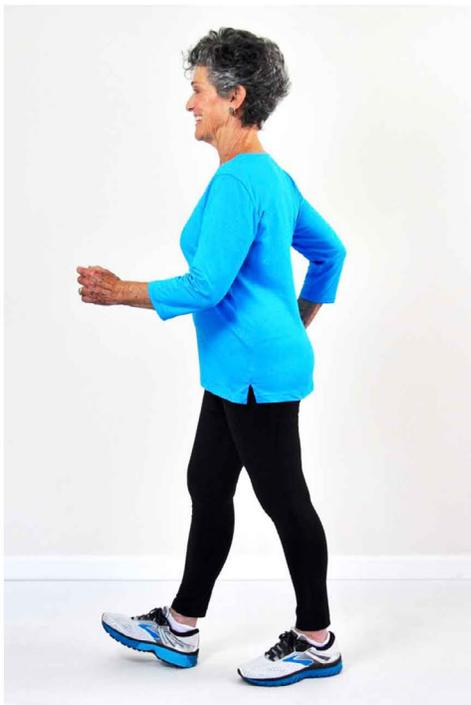
You can correct slumping by training your upper torso to remain lifted up and out of your low-back and hips. Improving posture makes you feel taller and look younger. *The Shirt Pull Exercise:* imagine you are pulling off a T-shirt. Cross your forearms in front at your hips and lift overhead. Stretch your torso and arms upward (without arching your back) until you feel more space in your torso. Maintain the space as you lower your arms. Repeat.

This time add *The Belly-Button to Backbone Exercise:* as your arms begin to return to your sides, imagine your belly button gently pressing toward your backbone (only to 20% of maximum effort). Feel how you engage your core muscles.

Repeat both exercises frequently during the day when walking, sitting, computing, or whenever you find yourself slumping. You will build a stronger core and lighter, taller posture.

# COMMON WALKING PROBLEM #6

## Upper Body Back to Lifted and Aligned



## UPPER BODY BACK

When we carry a heavy package in front, like a laundry basket or a baby, we naturally shift our upper body backward to balance the weight. All too frequently this posture becomes a habit.

## WARNING SIGNS

A slower walk, poor posture, shallow breathing, head, neck, and shoulder tension, a collapsed chest or spinal pain.

## THE PROBLEM

Over time, in the fight with gravity, the building blocks of our body (head, shoulders, chest, abdomen and hips) begin to slip downward. Soft tissue becomes compressed, eventually eroding joints and distorting the spongy discs between spinal vertebrae. Arthritis can set in. Nerves exiting the spine can become impinged causing pain.

## THE SOLUTION

You can correct Upper Body Back, by combining The Shirt Pull (taught in [#5 Slumping](#)) with the Rib-Cage Slide: lean your upper torso (rib cage to shoulders and head) flat against a wall (which will force your ribcage to slide forward) and practice the Shirt Pull you learned in the last exercise. Repeat frequently until you can stand sideways to a mirror and observe your new realignment. Ask a friend to take a photograph of you from the side to shift your inner image of how it feels to have better posture.

Practice the Rib-Cage Slide and the Shirt Pull exercises when standing and walking until you've mastered your taller, lighter aligned posture. You will build a stronger core and lighter, taller posture.

# COMMON WALKING PROBLEM #7

## Forward Head to Lighter and Taller



## FORWARD HEAD

Carrying the head forward of the spine is a common problem in modern culture. Cell phones, computing and driving, all contribute to forward head and poor posture. Car and airline seats have moved the headrest forward in response to this normal but unhealthy posture. Slumping in chairs and sleeping with thick pillows also contribute.

## WARNING SIGNS

Neck and shoulder pain from hours spent slumping in chairs, computing, playing video games or looking down at your cell phone.

## THE PROBLEM

When your 10 to 12-pound head is positioned forward of your torso, your neck, shoulders, and back muscles must over-work to hold the weight. Strain and pain builds in your eyes, jaw, and neck. Circulation to your brain is reduced. Over time, a rounded back, sunken chest, and shallow breathing develop. Energy flow is constrained and you feel and look older.

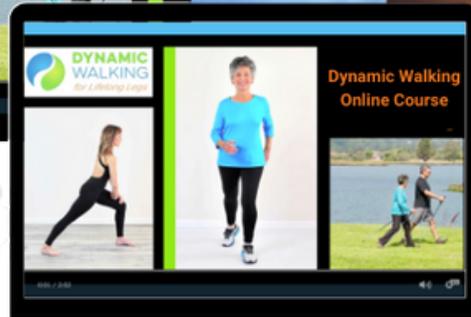
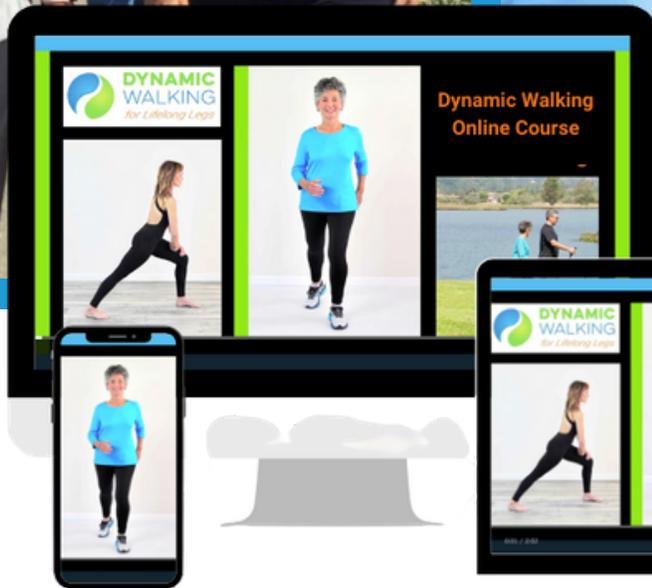
## THE SOLUTION

You can correct Forward Head beginning with repositioning your shoulders to create more space for your neck and head to realign. Practice *Shoulder Rolls* to stay tension free: circle your shoulders up, back, and down with an emphasis on bringing your shoulder blades together. Gently stretch your neck and head as you circle. When computing, raise your screen to eye level. When walking, stand tall and keep your head level versus looking down. Walk safely using the *Eye Scan Technique*: keep head level, eyes at the horizon, scan the road ahead, far to near, near to far continually. Make this a habit so you can see any problem on the path before you get there.

*Look at the figures below.  
Are you seeing them differently now?*



*Are you more aware of your own walk? Or how other people walk?*



Dive deeper into unlocking your unhealthy walking habits.  
Learn the best biomechanics to maximize your energy flow.

Get On the Early Bird list for the launch  
of the **Dynamic Walking online course** in early September.

» Get on the List

*"I'm able to walk pain free because of my Dynamic Walking Method.  
I want that for you, to walk away from pain, to walk strong, to walk free."*

*~ Dr. Suki*