



David A. Hjorth\*, ChFC, CLU, AEP  
Nicholas D. Hjorth\*\*, CPA, CLTC

414 NORTH SECOND, SUITE C  
UPLAND, CALIFORNIA 91786  
(909) 981-4951  
(909) 981-2768 FAX  
www.dh-financial.com

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## The Power of Power Walking

If you are new to our series of letters to clients, colleagues, and friends, you might not know that each end-of-summer report shares new perspectives on health. This past year our team has been passionate about walking, hiking, and running and we wanted to share our ideas with you.

**Who said physical fitness has to be so complicated?** It can be almost as simple as putting one foot in front of the other. *Informed* walking can help you maintain healthy weight, reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes, improve your balance and coordination, and lift your mood.

“Informed” means taking a true fitness approach to walking. Like becoming aware of your walking posture—head up, relaxed shoulders, arms bent slightly at the elbows, stomach muscles tightened slightly, and rolling your foot from heel to toe. Like going through the right preparation—shoes with arch support, flexibility, and shock absorption, an even walking course without hazards, warm-up and cool-down periods, and stretching before and after. Finally, establish realistic goals and effective time management to assure your commitment.

**Don't we all agree knowledge is power?** That's how *informed* walking becomes *power* walking. There is really only one more thing to know. Namely—gradually step up the pace. Power walking means walking briskly and steadily. Not like a stroll through the mall and not over-striding and over-pumping your arms. Keep it simple and natural but faster so that you incorporate a wider range of muscles for aerobic effect.

Below is some great input from our DH Financial team on their best power walking experiences:

*Being a busy, full-time working mom, it's hard to add exercise to my routine. However, I have found that by using my lunch breaks to get my 10,000 steps in per day has been extremely fulfilling. For these walks, I have focused on the beauty of the surrounding area of our office in downtown Upland. It's peaceful to walk through the gorgeous tree-lined streets, up and down Euclid, and enjoy—our "City of Gracious Living."*

**Joanna Denny, Director of Operations**

\* David Hjorth, Registered Representative offering securities through NYLIFE Securities LLC, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Licensed Insurance Agency  
3201 Temple Ave. Ste. 200, Pomona, CA 91768, 909-598-2333

\*\* Nicholas Hjorth, Registered Representative offering securities through NYLIFE Securities LLC, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Licensed Insurance Agency  
675 Placentia Avenue, Ste. 250, Brea, CA 92821, 714-255-5100

*One of my favorite runs is near the mountains by my house. Especially just before dawn, when I run through the majestic scene of the San Bernardino Mountains surrounding me as the light of dawn slowly starts to gleam above them, making me feel like I could conquer any run.*

**Viviana Oropeza, Associate Financial Advisor & Business Processing Associate**

*The Claremont Loop at the top of Mills Avenue in Claremont is one of my favorite places to hike. Whether I'm going on a leisurely walk or I'm looking for a challenge where I run the whole 5 mile loop, I feel so accomplished when I'm done. When you get to the top of the hill you can look down and see the entire valley; the sight is breathtaking. I highly recommend the Claremont Loop for your next hiking adventure!*

**Gina Imel, Client Service Associate**

*After work 1- 2 days a week, we have begun our walking journey up Euclid Avenue. It's such a scenic area. If you haven't been on this trail, you need to get up there. It's lined with willow trees that not only provide a shaded trail, but also give us a bit of nature in the city. We just completed week four of our journey. Our goal is to increase our walking distance and speed with each week. This is a great way to end your work day!*

**Samantha Abell, Client Service Associate**

**DeDe Dowens, Project & Marketing Associate**

**Tia Kaufman, Executive Administrative Associate**

**Can your walking speed estimate your life expectancy?** The March 2011 issue of the *Harvard Health Letter* published by Harvard Medical School says after age 65 how fast you walk may predict how long you have to live. Walking, or gait, has long been recognized as a proxy for overall health and has been measured in many studies. Researchers have found a remarkably consistent association between faster walking speed and longer life.

As we get older, the stroll that was once a walk in the park may get difficult for any number of reasons like angina, arthritis, bad balance, failing vision. However, a walking speed of 2.2 miles per hour—the speed needed to cross the street at most timed traffic lights—is a reliable indicator of living to normal life expectancy. Since power walking aims at 4 miles per hour and higher, we may be extending longevity above the norm with every step.

**What if you have joint pain?** Many bloggers in the fields of fitness, running, and martial arts are writing about collagen supplements as their most effective recovery choice. Because the body's ability to produce collagen internally declines with age, an outside source becomes necessary. Collagen supplements are well known anecdotally for repairing skin, hair, and nails, and may prove to be the next breakthrough for joint pain as clinical research continues. Google "NeoCell", a locally based international producer of collagen supplements in multiple forms for more details.

We would love to hear about your favorite walking trails along with what positive changes you have made in the way of physical fitness.

Best Regards,

David A. Hjorth, CLU, ChFC, AEP - Partner

Nicholas D. Hjorth, CPA, CLTC - Partner

Joanna L. Denny, CLTC - Director of Operations