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Fit: T-Tapp Your Toes

IF IT WALKS like a duck, it might just be you. That's one of **Teresa Tapp's** concerns about the way folks ambulate these days, with toes pointing slightly outward.

"If you look around, you'll notice everybody walking like ducks," says the fitness guru, whose exercise system T-Tapp promises you can be "**Fit and Fabulous in 15 Minutes**" (at least, that's the name of her [book](#), which came out last year).

Sound like quackery? Just try walking a whole day with your big toes pointed straight ahead. It can be pretty tricky, but breaking the habit translates into better posture, fewer joint problems and slimmer thighs, according to Tapp. With a few other stance adjustments, she says folks can optimize any stroll, so that even a trip to the mall is enough of a daily workout. "Less is more with T-Tapp," she chimes.



Washington area ladies hoping to better understand T-Tapp's principles flocked to **Falls Church** two weeks ago for a seminar with instructor **Kiona Leah** (she also offers weekly classes in **Laurel** — see [healthybykiona.com](#) for details). And if any of them wondered how she would fill a full half-hour with walking in place, after a few minutes of sweating, they knew.

The primary hurdle is understanding T-Tapp form. Not only should your big toes always be pointed directly ahead, you should also never put pressure on them — instead, walk on the three outer toes to protect your arches. Your feet should be hip distance apart, your rear should be tucked under (which requires your knees to be bent), and your shoulders should jut behind you to work your back.

And don't forget about your core. That should feel like it's working, too. "You're thinking, 'How are we gonna walk doing all of that?'" joked Leah. But it gets tougher once you incorporate upper-body movements, mainly pumping the arms out and up to activate those muscles, too.

No one misses the lack of tunes during the class. "There's no music because there's so much to look out for in the beginning," Tapp says. "It's hard to keep the upper and lower body activated at the same time and keep walking." Once students get the hang of it, though, they're able to use the technique everywhere.

Kristin Duarte, 41, signed up for Leah's seminar for some extra motivation, but she was already sold on its slimming powers. "Your legs feel all tingly and it makes me feel like I'm really burning fat," she says. "It helps saddle bags and the behind, which is where I have my areas of concern."

And although the posture feels bizarre, Leah insists it doesn't look odd to passers-by — except for the arm flinging. "But you can do any of that if you don't care about looking goofy," she says. She often sticks to hand squeezes, which she says reduces the finger swelling she often suffers in the summer and doesn't look any stranger than power walking.

"You feel it, but nobody sees it," assures Tapp, who says you may feel pigeon-toed trying to perfect the technique. But that's a better bird than the alternative: "You feel weird when you first try not to walk like a duck. But you'll slowly reverse your duck." In time, you might even progress to a swan.

Photo courtesy Teresa Tapp

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