

CATHY MILLER



60-MILE WALK SURVIVAL GUIDE

FROM AN OLD LADY WALKING
SECOND EDITION

60-Mile Walk Survival Guide

from an Old Lady Walking (2nd Edition)

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Old Lady Biz
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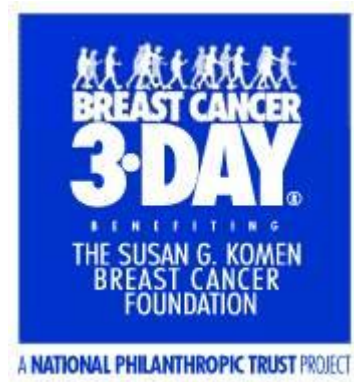
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INTRODUCTION



AVON SPONSORED THE ORIGINAL 3-Day, 60-Mile Walk until 2002. I was living in a lovely area of southern California, known as Channel Islands Harbor. It was there I first laid eyes on walkers making their way down the coast from Santa Barbara to Malibu.

I discovered they were walking to raise money for breast cancer research. I felt an instant connection, although I did not know anyone personally who had been diagnosed with breast cancer. I said to myself, “I need to do this.” You know what they say about the best-laid plans.

It wasn’t until years later when I received a call from my mother that I got my rear off the couch and signed up.

**MY SISTER HAD BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER.
NOW IT WAS PERSONAL.**



**IN 2007, SUSAN G. KOMEN CHANGED
THE LOOK OF THEIR LOGO**

In 2003, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation took over the 3-Day Walk, known then as the Breast Cancer 3-Day. That was the year I took my first step in a journey far beyond those first sixty miles.

I finally put my experience in my memoir debut – [*Perfectly Imperfect: How Walking 60 Miles in 3 Days Shed Plenty of Biases.*](#)

But this book is for the newbies to the 3-Day Walk. I originally created this guide in 2012 for the slightly worn walker I was and for all the newbies to come.

It pokes fun at the physical side of walking sixty miles in three days – all from the perspective of an old lady walking.



CURRENT LOGO

I was fifty-one when I participated in my first Walk and as of this date, I am still walking sixty miles in three days – as a *really* old lady walking. You do the math.

I hope the following tips give you plenty of smiles and some takeaways to become your own 3-Day Walking Warrior. The good Lord willing, I will see you out there.

Walk on.

Much love from the Old Lady Walking,

Cathy Miller AUTHOR
WALKING A BETTER PATH



TIP #1: FAVOR A FOOT FETISH

You may not spend a lot of time thinking about your feet. They get you from Point A to Point B. Occasionally, you may pamper them with a pedicure

With the 3-Day Walk, you want to focus on your feet.

In fact, favor a foot fetish. You cannot believe the impact of the foot follies of walking 60 miles.

The tiniest blister sneaks up on you with a screaming force that sends zombies racing away in terror. You may manage to ignore them throughout the day, only to feel their rage as you wake up in the morning to blood rushing to those pockets of pain.

Toenails bruise and fall off in escape from the constant pavement-slapping of walking 60 miles. Or perhaps it's the abuse of trusted shoes turning violent in protest of so much walking.

**YOUR FEET ARE MUCH MORE THAN
BODY EXTENSIONS**



Why walk 60 miles?
Because walking 61
miles would be silly.

SIGN AT THE 3-DAY WALK

You would think someone who has walked for over two decades in the 3-Day Walk for the Cure has all the answers. But the only answer this Old Lady Walking knows for sure is there is NO magic formula.

No two pairs of feet react the same to walking sixty miles in three days. But wouldn't that be nice? You could order your set of feet with specific accessories already attached. Just pop them on and off you go!

Alas, it is not so simple. Even the simplest of accessories (like socks and shoes) are walking contradictions.

- Some feet favor thick, cushiony socks.
- Others weep for light, dry-fit hugs of fabric.
- Some feet march to the beat of hiking shoes.
- While others race toward running shoes.

Strange feet (like mine) demand funny, curved-bottom walking sandals like the elusive MBT (Masai Barefoot Technology) brand.

MBT shoes were my happiest discovery, but the rocking soles present their own set of challenges. The initial experience is like trying to walk on a deck of a rocking boat at sea – drunk. However, I quickly became an MBT disciple.

MBTs rocked into my life before my fourth 3-Day Walk. In the prior three Walks, no matter what socks I wore or how much I trained, those sneaky blister bastards launched a full-on attack.



By Day Two of the Walk, blisters blossomed on both feet, filling their pockets with their own liquid pain. And as if that was not enough to put a hitch in my Old Lady stride, my big toenails started jumping ship, one of them abandoning its cozy bed twice.

Since wearing my MBTs, I have not had a single blister or lost any toenails in over 18 years. Take that you dastardly devils of foot doom!

But even with that success, the MBT company insists on throwing curve balls at me.

- The original creator of my godly MBTs sold the company.
- The quality after that was not as good.
- A ton of knock-offs flooded the market, making it difficult to find legitimate MBTs.
- Eventually, the company declared bankruptcy.
- But it has come back. Now if they would stop discontinuing the sandal models I love.

Experiment with Different Shoes

In the early days of the Walk, I trained religiously by the guidelines offered by the event coordinators.

Although I never got blisters on training walks (even on the longer 15 to 20-mile walks), when it came to the actual Walk, IT DID NOT MATTER.

Blisters burst onto the scene every dang Walk. Typically, it was on Day Two – about halfway through the 60 miles.

I experimented with all kinds of shoes until I landed on my rocky-bottomed MBTs. I even got professional guidance on my shoes.

- Professionals measured my feet.
- They prescribed inserts.
- They convinced me to purchase the closed shoes for my MBTs (until I learned to stand up for myself).



And most of what they offered, failed.

- **Measurements worked** – I found the recommended size and a half to two sizes bigger worked as my feet definitely swell walking 60 miles.
- **My inserts were sheer torture** – I had to stop on one of my training walks along Pacific Coast Highway to rip those inserts out of my shoes. My feet sang in jubilation.
- **Toenails still jumped ship** – my closed MBT shoes eliminated the blisters but my toenails still yearned to be free.

That does not mean professional fitting will not work for you. It just means that this Old Lady Walking's feet had other ideas.

That is why you must keep experimenting until you find what's right for you. As I said – there is no magic formula – sadly.

Follow the Facebook Susan G. Komen 3-Day groups for great suggestions on almost any topic. I can only speak for the San Diego one that I follow, but our Pink Bubble community is so helpful, especially for newbies. Some of the top recommended shoes I have seen on that page include:

- Hoka
- New Balance
- Brooks
- ASICS



The bottom line is your feet know what they like. No matter how great the review, your feet want what they want.

My Old Lady Walking feet are a perfect example. I have seen very few MBT recommendations. I have seen some but not a ton. Training walks are a great vehicle for **giving your shoes a test ride.**

Sacred Socks

Get ready for another trial-and-error experiment in sockdom.

I tried thick socks, thin socks, dri-fit, and two-pairs-at-once sock strategy. Since switching to MBTs and their blister-blasting freedom, my socks have not been an issue.

However, that does not mean I stopped experimenting. I am easily bored, and of course, there is the fashion angle. More about that later.

During 2010, teammate, Beth, joined the team. At the time, Beth was a personal trainer. How many teams do you know who have their own personal trainer?

Beth introduced me to Balega socks and it has been a love affair in blissful, blister-free blessings. My feet rejoice in shouts of Hallelujah!



I love how Balega produces a breast cancer-themed pair during October, but you must snag them fast. Their supply is limited.

I also tried Bombas because I wanted to support a company that supports the community. For each purchase made, Bombas donates one free pair of socks (and other clothing products) to those in need.

For me, the 3-Day Walk beats up on my Bombas, so I stick with my Balega socks. But I do wear Bombas for my shorter, daily walks.

Have you picked up on the theme that there is no right or wrong answer? You have to road-test your options. Again, the Facebook group is a great place to get feedback. Some of the popular socks include:

- Balega
- Bombas
- Wrightsocks
- Injinji (toe socks)



I am intrigued at the thought of wrapping each toe in its own little cocoon, especially due to the Old Lady Walking problem I have with calluses between my toes. And that brings me to my next Foot Fetish Fix.

Additional Foot Fetish Fixes

Life loves to poke fun at our aging bodies by throwing all kinds of new experiences. Many we could live without.

As my old feet twist into unrecognizable appendages, complete with bunions and curling toes, I developed calluses – between my toes! The more I walk (like that little 60-mile stroll), the calluses between my big toe and the toe next to it form jagged rock formations that would make Mother Nature proud.

Enter toe condoms. Okay, that's what I call them. I am not sure marketers would appreciate the tag, but it seems appropriate. I discovered two varieties – the closed condom product and the open-toed condoms.



TOE PROTECTORS
a.k.a. TOE CONDOMS

Like every other Foot Fetish Fix I've tried, toe condoms deliver their own brand of humor.

- Elasticized open-toed torture chambers strangled swelling toes.
- Lubricated closed toe condoms slid off, playing hide-and-seek inside my socks.
- The Callus Cure remains elusive.

The testing goes on, along with other fixes.

- Blister-preventing, anti-chafing lubricants like BodyGlide
- or the poor walker's version (my personal favorite), Vaseline.
- And don't forget foot massages – after 60 miles – ah, bliss – and a full body massage is even better.



It took my teammates and me several Walks before we learned the joy of a Monday-after-the-Walk spa day.

TIP #2: LIGHTEN THE LOAD

I like to think I get smarter with each 3-Day Walk that passes under my feet. But the realist in me thinks my changing strategy has more to do with aging – in so many ways.

One of the biggest changes over my two-plus decades is in what I carry while walking. There are essentials and then there are convenience items. You will be amazed how much that definition changes over the years.

Do you like how I assume you will be walking more than one 3-Day? Be forewarned. This event hooks you.

I learned a biological fact very early in my walking days.

Walking + Outdoors = Running Sinuses

Good to know *some* part of my body can run 60 miles.
Thank the sinus gods for creating travel-size tissue packs.

But I did not stop there. In the early days, I carried the following.

- Sunscreen, lip balm, eyeliner (running eyes are nature's makeup remover)
- Identification, money, and credit card
- Business cards, pen (always networking in those days)
- Extra pair of socks
- Pain reliever
- Body Glide or Vaseline
- Band-aids, Moleskin***
- Phone with camera
- Two water bottles – one for water and one for a sports drink
- Gloves, bandana

*** If you are unfamiliar with moleskin, it is a heavy woven fabric used to pad hot spots against friction to prevent blisters on your feet. Hot spots are just what they sound like. As you are walking, one area (oh, if it were only one!) may become sensitive and feel warm or hot as you walk on it. That's those sneaky blister bastards lurking beneath the surface.



Of course, I needed something to carry all that STUFF. Like many walkers, I started with a fanny pack that typically contained all of the above.

One problem. To celebrate the year I turned forty (years before), I decided to have back surgery. Welcome to an aging body.

By the end of Day Three, my back screamed in protest of the loaded-down fanny pack resting squarely on my surgery scar.

STOP THE MADNESS!

Did I really need to do my version of a pack mule?

I ditched the fanny pack and bought a windbreaker with a deep front pocket. When it warmed up, I tied the windbreaker around my waist.

I also downsized on what I carried, sort of.

Single water bottle holder (instead of two holders) – I now alternate between water and the sports drink.

One pair of socks – Since discovering my MBTs, I found a single pair of socks works just fine.



Seamless wrap – The event gave out these lovely multi-functional wraps.

They can act as a neck or ear warmer, an anchor to keep hats/rain ponchos from blowing away, or a coolant when dipping them in ice water on those hot days.

When not in use, the wraps become a lovely wrist adornment.

Vaseline/lip balm tube – Small keepers.

Sunscreen stick – Replaced the larger, heavier tube.

Minimalist I.D. & Credit card holder – Replaced heavier wallet.



I eliminated the following.

- Band-aids/moleskin (medics have them)
- Eyeliner/makeup (hey, walking 60 miles – who cares? Besides, that's why God invented sunglasses)
- 1-2 extra pairs of socks (I love my MBTs) – If you do carry an extra pair, socks act as great warmers for colder mornings – no need for gloves.
- Sanitary wipes (3-Day provides them)

Even tissues are offered by wonderful cheering residents (at least in San Diego). They obviously understand the theory of:

Walking + Outdoors = Running Sinuses

Residents/local businesses set up tables that have lip balm, sunscreen, and wipes. So, **lighten the load** and figure out your own must-haves.

Devoted Pack Mules

I am a firm believer in doing your own thing. What works for me may not for you. That's okay.

But I admit I marvel at some walkers' notion of "must-haves."

- **Backpacks** that could support a 14-day trek around Europe.
- **Fanny packs** so full you expect the force of gravity to pull the walker on her back.
- **Double duty** with some walkers sporting fanny packs and backpacks.

In San Diego, the event even set up a **dropoff for jackets** and other paraphernalia that you shed during the Walk.

If you sleep in camp (those days are behind this Old Lady) – don't worry about luggage. The event provides luggage gods, too!

TIP #3: FORGET FASHION



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BLING

I lived two years in Minneapolis. I remember two morning radio disc jockeys counseling newbies to the Twin City area.

Their advice? Forget fashion – dress to stay warm.

You could say something similar about dressing for the 3-Day Walk.



Forget fashion – just wear pink

You may find this hard to believe – I don't like pink – except when it comes to the 3-Day Walk. The following is a small list of what I've worn over the years.

- **Pink Toes & heels** on my socks
- **Pink Wraps** for warmth
- **Pink Piping** on my capris
- **Pink Scarf** where I attach the names of loved ones ***
- **Pink Safety Pins** to attach those names to the scarf
- **Pink Sports Bra** okay, too much information(!)

Not to mention the endless **pink** adornments that end up on our heads, feet, arms, and necks.



*** I have since gone a different route (pardon the pun) for wearing the Names for the Walk. See more about that later.

In 2010, we had a monsoon creep in on Day Two. I mean a wind-whipping, walker-whooping gully-washer. So, we wrapped our pink in yellow ponchos.

You can take this to the bank. The last thing on your mind is fashion when you go through this experience.



- Being pelted by rain so hard you swear someone is shooting BBs at you.
- Umbrellas turned inside out and ripped to shreds.
- Sitting on rocks under a bridge to change socks, only to be drenched the minute you clear the bridge.

And although I am not a fan of pink in my everyday attire, I did manage to find pink ponchos that I packed for years.

It was not until 2025 when Mother Nature decided to show San Diego and all of us that she could do even better than 2010. A Level Three atmospheric river pounded us with rain and double-digit velocity winds.



BUT AT LEAST WE WORE PINK!

The most addicting fashion statement of the 3-Day Walk is the collection of pins – and what my sister calls – neat junk.

- CANCER SUCKS pins
- Other variations
- Not all printable
- Little pink teddy bears
- Pink ribbons
- Team name t-shirts and hats



CHECK OUT MY LANYARD'S PINS

The more you have, the better. I know, doesn't exactly go with the lighter load theme, but some items are simply essential.

Most walkers adorn their fanny packs with pins and neat junk. When I dumped mine, I had to find an alternative carrier for my bling.

My water bottle holder and lanyard for credentials does the trick.

Let's not forget about the most important accessory

– the Names for the Walk. Many walkers honor those affected by breast cancer by wearing their names.

- The names who inspire the walker
- A family member, a friend, or the names provided by those who donate to the Walk



The list of names I wear has grown significantly. The great news is the survivors outnumber those we lost.

With that growing list is an increasing challenge on how to wear those names.

The trial-and-error nature of the 3-Day Walk has led to some pretty comical results.



- **Trying to write on silicone wristbands** – if there is a pen that works, I did not find it.
- **Attaching names to wristband** with tape – talk about an irritating rub!
- **Using fabric markers to put names on my satin cape** – great, until it rained.
- **Using business card stock** to attach names to a scarf only to watch them wilt away from rain.
- **A soggy placard** (rain again) slapping me in the face as the wind picked up.

I admire the walkers who have individual ribbons, each with a name honoring someone.

With my current list approaching 180 names, I *definitely* do not have the patience to create 180 ribbons.

Not to mention, where the heck would I pin them all?

The following are a few methods I've tried or observed.

- **Pink ribbons** work if you have a manageable number of names.
- **T-shirts** imprinted with the names are another cool look.
- **Scarves** with the names written on them may work.
- **Laminated placards** with the names imprinted and attached with a lanyard (pink bling, of course) is my current method.

My rain-soaked names led me to laminated placards.

Success – until you hit a Level Three Atmospheric River where the pounding rain seeps into the lamination.

**THE CHALLENGE IS REAL. BUT NEVER AS CHALLENGING
AS DEALING WITH BREAST CANCER.**

TIP #4: COUNT CALORIES

(MORE OR LESS)



Food, glorious food. The 3-Day Walk is a 60-mile buffet table extravaganza.

- Pit stops with pig-out delights
- Featuring your forbidden pleasures
- Chips, bagels, peanuts, cheese sticks
- And PBJs!!! (peanut butter & jelly)
- Did I mention the PBJs?!

The supporters – I have walked all of my 3-Day Walks in San Diego (where I used to live).

The support of the San Diego community is nothing short of phenomenal.

Supporters come out in droves to offer sweet concoctions that would make Willy Wonka weep.



- Homemade, warm-baked cookies
- Every candy bar known to man (and woman) kind
- Licorice sticks, push-up frozen treats
- And my personal favorite – fresh strawberries
- To name a few

Taste bud overload – Believe it or not – you can overload on food – even when walking 60 miles.

- **Loose Lips** – My first year I thought I had to eat at every pit stop offering food. Uh, no. Pace yourself – especially on the supporters’ sweet offerings.
- **Calorie count** – On the other hand – relax. I remember seeing one walker flipping over a nutrition bar to check out the number of calories. Trust me. You can afford the extra calories.

And then there are the famous words of Forrest Gump.



I gotta pee.



Yes, peeing is a major deal on the 3-Day Walk. Need to do it. Often, it is all you think about – especially the older I get!

But, this is me – and maybe only me – after the first few Walks, I found I could alternate between water & sports drinks between pit stops. I no longer drink ~

1 WATER + 1 SPORTS DRINK FOR EVERY PIT STOP

CAN YOU SPELL RELIEF?

TIP #5: PAVE YOUR OWN PATH



If I learned anything in participating in over two decades of 3-Day Walks, it's **march to the beat of your own drum.**

Okay, that may be my own middle child of seven stubbornness. There will be those who ~

- Tell you how to train
- Which shoes to wear
- When to get on a sweep van

While I appreciate hearing what works for others, I know not all the advice works for me.

Here are a few examples of my contrariness.

TRAINING – I no longer follow the training plan that gradually builds to 20 miles. Instead, I find walking 5-6 miles/day consistently is all the training I need.

BUS PASS – After ripping off my baby toenail (not on purpose – duh!), I developed the **worst blister ever**. But I refused to be put on a sweep van at the **last** pit stop. I walked the remaining 3 miles in my stocking feet.



KNOW WHEN TO FOLD ‘EM – I also learned it was okay to hit the sweep vans when my fat, out-of-shape body couldn’t master the hills.

I’m happy to report that all this walking has me back in shape. Once again, I **navigate every hill and all 60 miles.**



CONCLUSION

My point? Yes, there is one.

The 3-Day Walk for the Cure is a unique experience.

- My shoes may not be your shoes
- Your socks might chafe me but work for you
- Our training may take different paths

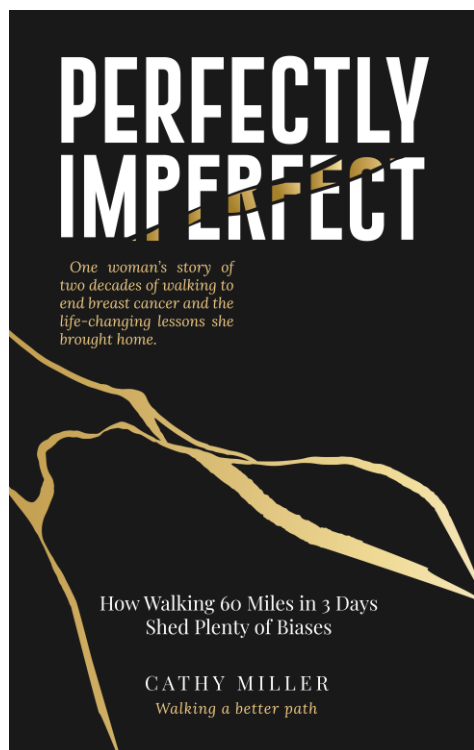
The reason may be because I am an **OLD LADY WALKING**



But there is one truth for every individual who participates.

The 3-Day Walk for the Cure will change your life.

Walk on.



My memoir debut, *Perfectly Imperfect: How Walking 60 Miles Shed Plenty of Biases*, shares lessons and stories from participating in the 3-Day Walk for the Cure.

It only took me two-plus decades to publish it. But, hey, that means even more lessons and stories to share.

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