

Walking Through It

A guide to finding steady steps



For men living without their children
in Stockport

Welcome

Walking doesn't make everything better. It doesn't erase grief, fix separation, or take away the weight you're carrying.

But sometimes, walking gives just enough space to breathe. One step after another, it can steady the body and ease the mind. Even for a little while.

This booklet isn't about forcing yourself to exercise. It's about exploring what walking might mean for you, in your own time, in your own way.

Take the bits that help. Leave the rest. And remember: however you walk through this, you don't have to do it alone.

Where I'm at right now

Before thinking about walking, it helps to check in with yourself.

Reflection prompt:

- What's my energy like today?
- Do I feel more restless, heavy, or numb?
- What's one word that describes where I'm at?

Whatever comes up is OK. You don't have to push through it or compare yourself to anyone else.

Why walking can help (sometimes)

Walking isn't a cure, but research shows it can:

- Calm the stress response.
- Ease tension in the body.
- Help the mind "untangle" when thoughts are stuck.
- Create a shift just by changing your environment.

If that feels far off right now, that's fine.
Sometimes the benefit only shows up afterwards.

Finding your own pace

Some dads need to walk fast, burn energy, feel sweat. Others need slow steps, headphones, or even silence.

Reflection prompt:

- What kind of walk might feel right for me today — fast, slow, long, short?
- Do I prefer being with someone, or on my own?

There's no wrong pace. The "right" walk is the one that feels doable for you.

Walking alone vs. walking with someone

Both can matter:

- Alone: space to think, get things straight in your head or just be, listen to music or a podcast
- With someone: company, conversation that flows more easily side-by-side than face-to-face.

Reflection prompt:

- Who's one safe person I could ask to join me or who I'd be OK to walk silently beside?

What to do with racing thoughts

Sometimes walking gives your brain space. Other times it feels like your thoughts just get louder.

You might try:

- Counting steps or breaths.
- Listening to music, a podcast, or birds.
- Naming what you see (trees, cars, colours).
- Appreciating the scenery and taking photos
- Setting little targets to reach on the path ahead

It's not about emptying your mind, it's about giving it something gentler to hold.

Safe routes & small steps

If leaving the house feels daunting:

- Start with a very short route — even 5 minutes round the block.
- Pick a safe place you know well.
- Notice how you feel before and after, without judgement.
- If you're struggling with motivation, remember that you can always turn round and go back

Reflection prompt:

- What's one place I feel safe to walk today?

Walking and grief

Grief can hit suddenly on a walk. A memory, a smell, a family out together.

If that happens:

- Stop and breathe.
- Find somewhere to sit if needed.
- Remind yourself: this wave will pass.
- If it's too much, it's OK to head home.

Being floored by grief doesn't mean you're weak.
It means your love is alive and still with you.

Building a steady habit (only if it helps)

For some dads, a rhythm helps:

- A regular walk at the same time each day.
- Tracking steps or distance as a small sense of progress.
- Linking a walk to another routine (after coffee, after work).

Reflection prompt:

- Would a steady rhythm help me — or would it feel like pressure?

If walking feels impossible

Some days, even five minutes outside feels too much. That's OK.

Options:

- Stand at the door and breathe fresh air.
- Open a window and stretch.
- Save the walk for another day.

You don't fail if you don't walk. You're still doing your best with the weight you're carrying.

My walking plan

- Place I'll try walking: _____
- Time of day that feels doable: _____
- Alone / with someone: _____
- One thing I'll notice while walking: _____

Emergency plan

If being outside feels overwhelming:

1. Pause and breathe.
2. Find somewhere safe (bench, bus stop, shop).
3. Call or text a safe person.

You're allowed to stop at any point. There's no prize for pushing too far.

Resources & support

Samaritans - 116 123 (24/7, free)

CALM - 0800 58 58 58 (5pm-midnight)

Shout - Text 85258 (anytime)

Closing words

Walking won't erase grief, loneliness, or separation. But sometimes, one step can carry you into the next.

However far you go, around the block or across the park, it still counts.

Take the steps that are yours to take. At your pace. In your time.

Help us support more dads

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Somebody's Dad CIC is a non-profit. Everything we do is funded through grants and donations.

If this booklet has helped in any way and you want to support dads going through tough times, please consider making a donation through our website.

somebodysdad.org/fundraising

Every pound goes directly into providing our service and the support for dads who need it most.

Thank you.



For men living without their children
in Stockport

If you have suffered the loss of a child or are
unable to see your children due to the breakdown
of a relationship, we provide Six 1-to-1 funded
walking therapy sessions to help you talk through
the issues you face

Our service is open to men in Stockport (SK postcode)
Get in touch today:

somebodysdad.org
contact@somebodysdad.org

