

## Make tracks for the great indoors

The weather outside may be frightful, but there are lots of ways to get in a good indoor fitness walk despite the cold. We joined one downtown denizen on her regular Minneapolis skyway routine.

**Josephine Marcotty**, Star Tribune

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Julie Cahoy walks the Minneapolis downtown skyways regularly for exercise.

**Renee Jones Schneider**, Star Tribune

Julie Cahoy started walking the Minneapolis skyway system about five years ago, and she sure has it down.

Three afternoons a week in wintertime you can spot her skipping up the escalator from the Wells Fargo building to the second floor of Gaviidae Common, where she really starts to move.

After years of trial and error she's figured out a route that takes her from the heart of downtown, into the bowels of Hennepin County Government Center and off to the far corners of parking ramps adjacent to Target Center.

It takes her an hour. Not an hour of sauntering at window-shopping speed. She walks at an arm-swinging, hip-rotating, keep-on-trucking, high-speed pace that takes her to branches of the skyway system many have never seen.

Sure, you say, it's easy for her because she works downtown. The skyway is just an elevator ride away.

But there is an abundance of indoor walking places scattered across Minnesota -- from high schools to arenas to malls. Many places sponsor walking groups and clubs. So never mind the ice and snow, the rain and fog and the dark. Put on those treads and go.

For inspiration, let's follow Cahoy, 47, of Plymouth, for an hour up and down and around downtown Minneapolis.

Tip No. 1: Don't go between noon and 1 p.m. It's too crowded.

At 1 p.m. on a recent Thursday she stepped off the elevator on the main floor of the Wells Fargo Center. She's small enough so that she seemed to slip between elbows as she walked up the escalator to Gaviidae Common. She started walking on her lunch break five years ago when she decided to try a 10,000 Steps Program for exercise. Her route, she says, is about 4,000 steps, or 4 miles.

So far she has not persuaded any of her colleagues at the Ellison Williams investment banking firm, where she works as a controller, to go along. Her husband, she said, won't walk with her, either.

"He says I walk too fast," she said.

And she is pretty darned quick.

Tip No. 2: Try not to open doors with your hand.

Hundreds of people pass through those doors every day. Who knows how many have left behind a bug from a cough or the flu?

We whiz past a cozy public seating area with cushy chairs and an electric fireplace in the 5th Street Tower.

"That's brand new," she said, maintaining her pace. She blows right past Italian and Chinese restaurants, and coffee shop after coffee shop. The Classic Cookie Company, with its 4-inch chocolate chip and peanut butters, doesn't attract so much as a glance.

Tip No. 3: Don't be tempted by treats.

After all, you'll just have to walk it off the next day.

She whips through the Qwest building, glances at the gloomy gray sky while crossing 4th Street, and takes a hard right. On her left across Washington Av. is the old Milwaukee Depot, and straight ahead is a long, empty skyway.

"There aren't nearly as many people over here," she said. "It really thins out."

Tip No. 4: Explore.

That's how Cahoy found her way through the maze of tunnels and stairwells back to the skyway. She takes an obscure stairway down to the ornate main floor of the Grain Exchange building.

She takes two steps across an alley, through a door and down another staircase and she's in a tunnel that takes her to the basement of City Hall, then south across 5th Street to Hennepin County Government Center. She hops up two flights of stairs, through the

Government Center to the east side of the Thrivent building, where she exchanges a nod with a pair of women headed in the opposite direction. They, too, are walkers.

"You can tell by their shoes," Cahoy said.

She heads south across 8th Street and zigzags through a blur of buildings until she passes through the IDS Center.

"This is about halfway," she said.

A few minutes later she crosses Nicollet Mall, whips around the Target Store at 9th and heads to St. Thomas University (that silence you hear is the sound of minds at work), across Hennepin Avenue through the Carmichael Lynch Building.

And now she starts to hit her stride.

Tip No. 5: Save energy for the parking ramp skyways near Target Center.

The skyway turns straight north. Here it's cool, wide open and empty. You could jog if you wanted to.

"This part is really popular with walkers," she said.

She walks along 2nd Avenue N. for 10 or 15 minutes, does a quick 180-degree turn at the end of the hallway in the 4th Street garage and heads back to Target Center.

A hard left takes her into a gallery of oversized Kevin Garnett photos. Back across Hennepin, she's suddenly in civilization again.

"This is the home stretch," she says as she heads into City Center.

Sure enough, within minutes she's standing back on the main floor of Wells Fargo, waiting for the elevator to take her back to her desk on the 38th floor.

The only sign that she has just finished a 4-mile walk is the pink color in her cheeks.

Josephine Marcotty • 612 673 7394 [marcotty@startribune.com](mailto:marcotty@startribune.com)