

The Power Walkers

Let's say you love going for a walk – such good exercise and a chance to see neighbors and wave at passersby.

Let's also say it's 100 degrees out there, or it's threatening rain, you've already walked a mile and now it's another mile-long walk to get back home, and you feel vulnerable because there's nobody around.

OK, consider the option of dropping in on the Power Walkers, who meet daily at 7:30 a.m. in the Silver Slipper room, alongside the main exercise room at the clubhouse. There are no dues or registration; just show up 😊. It's air-conditioned. You can stop when you want. You can chat and make new friends who are walking – or sitting and taking a break -- along with you. And the physical exercise you'll experience with Power Walkers will be more complete than your huffing around the 'hood, but it won't push you to exhaustion because – yep -- you can stop whenever you want.

Meet club founder Cheryl Beaudry, 76, who created Power Walkers 15 years ago as an opportunity for Solera residents to exercise under the best possible conditions – physically and socially. The secret: She purchased an exercise tape specifically designed to strengthen the very muscles used in walking.

Depending on which exercise episode the tape is playing, the regimen – sometimes including carrying weights or pulling stretch bands -- will coax you along for a mile, or two or three, or even five if you're up for it. But it's all up to you; there are chairs nearby.

“We do this for exercise – and for camaraderie,” Cheryl says. “When we're done, we sit around and chat and become good friends.”

And that's maybe the best payoff of all.

