

Taking Steps to Better Health



Health experts recommend that everyone get 30 minutes of exercise each day to maintain good health. The 30 minutes can be done all at once or spread out throughout the day. The main goal is to *get moving!*

Walking is a great way to achieve your physical activity goals. If you walk or do other exercise regularly you will:

- ❖ Feel less tired and have more energy to do things you like to do
- ❖ Help your body use insulin more effectively & improve blood glucose levels
- ❖ Strengthen your heart and lungs
- ❖ Have better heart health (including blood cholesterol levels & blood pressure)
- ❖ Reduce body fat and increase muscle
- ❖ Find it easier to maintain a healthy weight
- ❖ Feel more confident and be less stressed

A fun and easy way to assure you are getting enough physical activity is to count your steps each day. Research indicates that taking 10,000 steps a day is close to 30 minutes of exercise and this has been set as a goal by many health experts. But this number is not set in stone. If you're now getting in 2,000 to 3,000 steps daily and you increase to 4,000 steps -- that's a great improvement! A pedometer is a useful tool to help you monitor your activity level each day and help you set some measurable personal goals. Be sure to start slowly and add a few steps a day -- they will add up quickly over weeks and months.

It is a good idea to consult with your doctor before starting an exercise program, especially if you have any health concerns such as diabetes or heart disease. Be sure to wear comfortable, well-fitting "walking shoes" that do not pinch or constrict your feet.

Set and write down goals each week. Keep a log of your steps and how you are feeling while exercising. Also, you don't just have to walk! Other forms of exercise like swimming, water aerobics & bike riding won't be counted on your pedometer but are just as beneficial. Be sure to record these activities on your log page. Don't forget to reward yourself when you meet a goal!



Every Step Counts . . . Ways to Fit In More Steps Each Day

- Aim for the farthest parking spot from your destination, not the closest.
- Use the stairs instead of the escalator or elevator.
- Take a "walk break" instead of a "coffee break".
- Go down every aisle of the grocery store even if you only need a few things.
- Use a cordless phone and pace around while you're talking.
- Make your dog the happiest pet on the block! Take him for a walk two to three times a day instead of just once. (No dog? Get one.)
- Take up country line dancing - or any other kind of dancing - and you will rack up lots of steps without feeling like you are "working out".
- Find a walking buddy and get in a routine!
- Bad weather? Find an indoor gym or building to walk in or do 10 minute "laps" in your house a few times during the day.
- Clean your house - dusting, vacuuming and mopping will rack up steps.
- Turn off the TV and go for a walk *or* at least walk during commercials.

