

Walk 6,000 to 10,000 Steps Daily



CHALLENGE

Use a pedometer to track your daily steps this month.

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Use a pedometer over a 3-day period to determine the average number of steps you normally take each day. Increase that number by 1,000 to 2,000 steps for the first week. Each consecutive week, increase your steps by 1,000 to 2,000 until you reach the goal of 8,000 to 10,000 steps most days of the week (aim for at least 5 days weekly).
2. On your monthly Health Challenge Calendar, record the number of steps you take each day.
3. Read "How walking helps," "How to count steps," and "How to get more steps."
4. To complete the Challenge, you must walk 6,000 steps on at least 17 days and 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day on a minimum of 5 days this month.
5. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

How walking helps

Physical fitness is a key component in living a long and healthy life. It reduces the risk of dying of coronary heart disease and decreases the risk for certain cancers, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It can also be your solution to feeling tired, bored, and out of shape.

Regular physical activity can help you:

- ✓ Build muscle strength
- ✓ Feel more energetic
- ✓ Develop aerobic or cardiovascular fitness
- ✓ Lose weight and control your appetite
- ✓ Sleep better
- ✓ Lower your risk of diabetes
- ✓ Lower your blood pressure
- ✓ Improve your blood cholesterol levels
- ✓ Lower your risk of heart disease and stroke

- ✓ Protect your bones against osteoporosis
- ✓ Decrease the risk for colon, breast, and other cancers
- ✓ Relieve stress
- ✓ Reduce anxiety and depression
- ✓ Relieve arthritis and back pain
- ✓ Lower your risk for gallstones
- ✓ Lower the risk of impotence
- ✓ Help delay the effects of aging, and live longer!

You don't need to join an expensive gym or commit to a rigorous exercise or training routine. You can incorporate physical activity habits into your life step by step.

Walking is often something people do for leisure or social reasons. Because of this, some people have a hard time thinking of walking as exercise. But it is! A study of middle-aged women found that taking at least 10,000 steps a day can help keep weight under control and decrease your risk of overweight-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

10,000 steps might seem like a lot of walking. If you are sedentary, making a small, achievable goal – such as, "I will increase my steps by 1,000 to 2,000 this week" – may be easier for you to attain. Once you accomplish 2,000, increase your goal by another 1,000 to 2,000. Before you know it, you'll be walking 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day.

If you are already active, 10,000 steps may not be challenging enough. You may want to aim for 12,000 to 15,000 steps – or more!

How to count steps

A pedometer is a device that will count the number of steps you take, whether you are walking or running. It clips to your waistband or belt. When you first get your pedometer, wear it for a day or two to find out how many steps you are currently taking. Then, increase your steps by 1,000 to 2,000 each week until you are taking 8,000 to 10,000 steps daily.



While a pedometer is a convenient way to keep track of your steps, you can estimate your steps by knowing that 30 minutes of brisk walking might add up to anywhere from 3,000 to 4,000 steps depending on your height, stride, and pace. Twenty minutes of walking is equal to about 2,000 steps. When running, you cover 2,000 steps every 10 minutes or so.

If you have a sedentary job, you might need to walk for 60 minutes to reach your goal of 8,000 to 10,000 steps. But you don't have to do it all at once. You can break the minutes into as little as 10-minute sessions – or exercise 30 to 60 minutes all at once.



Comfortable shoes

The only special equipment you really need for this Health Challenge (other than possibly a pedometer) is a good pair of shoes. Any shoes that are comfortable, provide support, and don't cause blisters will do, but here are some suggestions to help you make your selection:

- Training-model running shoes (with cushioning soles) are good walking shoes. So are some of the light-weight trail and hiking boots, or any casual shoes with flexible, cushioning soles.
- Make sure your walking shoes have good arch supports. You can buy quality insoles at a running shoe store to give you more arch support and cushion.
- If one or both feet excessively roll inward or outward (called pronation), get shoes with an anti-pronation design.
 - Look for a low, supportive heel that rounds (or bevels) in. A thick heel or one that flairs out will cause your foot to slap down rather than roll.
 - Buy shoes with uppers made of materials that breathe, such as mesh or air holes.
 - Measure both feet while standing. If one foot is larger than the other, try on a pair that fits your larger foot.
 - Your shoes should be snug, but not tight. If you're a woman with wide feet, try men's or boys' shoes. They are cut a bit wider through the heel and ball of the foot.
- Exercise may make your feet swell; so does being on your feet throughout the day. Go shopping for shoes in the evening, when your feet are larger.
- Go shoe shopping in a pair of socks you'll be wearing during your walks.
- Walk in the shoes before buying them. They should feel comfortable right away.
- Make sure your heel fits snugly in each shoe and doesn't slip as you walk.

How to get more steps

- ✓ Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- ✓ Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning and go for a short walk
- ✓ Walk to the bus or train stop
- ✓ Walk to each end of the mall when you go shopping
- ✓ Park your car a few blocks away from the store
- ✓ Plan a "walking" meeting
- ✓ Walk around the block during your lunchtime or break
- ✓ Walk after work
- ✓ Walk 10 minutes after dinner to settle your meal
- ✓ Take your dog for a walk
- ✓ Jog in place
- ✓ Workout with an exercise video

Learn more about getting 10,000 steps, from Shape Up America! www.shapeup.org/shape/steps.php



Shape Up America! 2009.

The Walking Site. 2009.

American College of Sports Medicine. 2009.

Expand the Challenge!

You might be interested in carrying this challenge into the next month or year. As you keep track of your steps (or minutes), you might also want to log your weight, or keep notes on how you feel (mentally or physically) or how your body is looking. You should notice that you feel better, look better, and have more endurance.



Walk 6,000 to 10,000 Steps Daily

CHALLENGE

Use a pedometer to track your daily steps this month.

Instructions

1. Post this record sheet where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the average number of steps you take each day.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you took 1,000 to 2,000 more steps than your average. You must take 6,000 steps on at least 17 days and 8,000 to 10,000 steps on at least 5 days during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this healthy practice for a lifetime of good health.
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH:

HC = Health Challenge™ • ex. min. = exercise minutes

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
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_____ Number of days this month I walked 6,000 to 7,999 steps _____ Number of days this month I walked 8,000+ steps
 _____ Number of days I was physically active for at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:



Signature _____ Date _____