

# Step lively... and often

October 2016 Newsletter



Do you know about the “10,000 steps” initiative? <sup>1</sup> The goal is to help improve fitness. It encourages us all to take 10,000 steps each day. But how does that translate to your everyday life?

One mile is about 2,000-2,500 steps, depending on the length of your stride. So 10,000 steps equal about 5 miles.

But the point isn't to take one long walk and then sit the rest of the day. The goal is to be more active throughout the day.

## Walking gives you time to reflect

Taking a walk during the day isn't just good for physical fitness. It also gives you time to think and reflect. Some people say that it's like giving their brain a chance to “stretch”.

## Do you have a sedentary lifestyle?

Do you work at a desk or computer? When you come home, do you surf the net to relax? These answers can give you an idea of how many steps you're not taking each day.

Being sedentary can be risky for your health. An inactive lifestyle may contribute to depression, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, sleep problems and other health issues. <sup>2</sup>

## Find out how many steps you're taking

Invest in a pedometer, fitness wristband or simply download a free “step counter” app on your phone. You don't need to spend a lot. You just need a way to count how many steps you take.

Wear or carry your pedometer, wristband or phone all day for two weeks. Go about your normal routine and record the number of steps you've taken at the end of each day. (Some apps will do this

for you.) After two weeks, you'll have a good idea of your average activity level.

**Note:** 10,000 steps may not be a sensible goal for you. Don't be put off. Just determine your average number of steps and try to increase them each week until you meet your goal. If you have a disability, you can find other ways to measure your fitness and activity. <sup>3</sup>

Also, check with your doctor before starting any new fitness plan. And always add exercise gradually to help avoid injury.

## Ready, set, go...

There are many simple ways to increase your steps:

- 1. Stand up every 30 minutes.** Set an alarm to go off every half hour. Stretch or walk around for 2-5 minutes.
- 2. Walk while you're on the phone.** Talk time can also be walk time.
- 3. Take the stairs.** Choose the stairs instead of the elevator.
- 4. Leave the best parking space for someone else.** If it's safe to do so, park at a distance to add steps when you go to work, the mall or the supermarket.
- 5. Make things less convenient.** Arrange your workspace so you have to get up to get a drink of water or do work-related tasks.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of fall weather. Get out and go for a walk!

<sup>1</sup>[www.thewalkingsite.com](http://www.thewalkingsite.com)

<sup>2</sup>[www.americashealthrankings.org](http://www.americashealthrankings.org)

<sup>3</sup>[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles)