



Walk 6,000 to 10,000 Steps

CHALLENGE

Walk 6,000 to 10,000 steps each day.

Requirements to Complete this WELLNESS CHALLENGE

1. Use a pedometer over a three-day period to determine the average number of steps you normally take each day. Increase that number by 2,000 steps for the first week. Each consecutive week, increase your steps by 2,000 until you reach the goal of 10,000 steps daily.
2. On your monthly Wellness 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 at least 10,000 steps a day on a minimum of five 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 2,000 this week” – may be easier for you to attain. Once you accomplish 2,000, increase your goal by another 2,000. Before you know it, you'll be walking at least 10,000 steps a day.

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. A pedometer can convert your steps into distance based on stride length. If you don't want to actually measure your stride length, you can set the pedometer on the average: 2 feet 6 inches for men and 2 feet 3 inches for women.

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 2,000 each week until you are taking at least 10,000 steps daily. Adjust the accuracy of your pedometer by walking 100 steps. If your pedometer reads 90, push the sensitivity adjustment toward +; if it reads 110, push the sensitivity adjustments toward -.

While a pedometer is a convenient way to keep track of your steps, you can estimate your steps by knowing that walking one mile equals about 2,000 steps.





How to get more steps

You don't have to get your steps in all at once. You can break your walking into as little as 10-minute sessions – or exercise 30 to 60 minutes all at once. Here are other ways to increase your daily steps:

- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Get up 15 minutes earlier in the morning and go for a short walk
- Walk to each end of the mall when you go shopping
- Walk to the bus or train stop
- 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
- Take your dog for a walk
- Walk 10 minutes after dinner to settle your meal
- Jog in place
- Workout with an exercise video



Helpful hints for walkers

- Stretch gently after walking
- Drink water before and after exercising. If it is hot, drink during your walk
- Stand up straight when you walk
- Look ahead (not down at the ground)
- Swing your arms and bend your elbows
- Start slowly, increase your speed and then slow down a few minutes before you finish
- Take quick, easy strides and walk as fast as feels comfortable
- Try walking at a faster pace for 30-60 seconds every 1-2 minutes. It will increase your heart rate and build your endurance
- Progress gradually – increase your pace and distance as you build strength and endurance

Other activities equivalent to 2,000 steps

When the pedometer doesn't work, or you'd like a change, most other activities are OK.

- Bicycling leisurely for 20 minutes
- Swimming laps at a moderate pace for 15 minutes
- Swimming laps at a vigorous pace for 10 minutes
- Bicycling at a vigorous pace for 10 minutes

Comfortable shoes

The only special equipment you really need for this Wellness 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.

Expand the Challenge!

If you are already active, 10,000 steps may not be challenging enough. Aim for 12,000 steps or more! 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.

Sources: *The Walking Site*. 2007; *American College of Sports Medicine*. 2006.





Walk 6,000 to 10,000 Steps

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of steps you take each day.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you took at least 2,000 more steps than average. You must take 6,000 steps on at least 17 days and at least 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. Turn in your Wellness Challenge form if requested, or enter your completion of this Challenge on the Health Activity Tracker report for the month, if applicable. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

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MONTH: _____							WC = Wellness Challenge	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
WC [] ex. min. _____	WC [] ex. min. _____	WC [] ex. min. _____	WC [] ex. min. _____	WC [] ex. min. _____	WC [] ex. min. _____	WC [] ex. min. _____		
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_____ Number of days this month I walked 6,000+ steps
 _____ Number of days this month I walked 10,000+ steps

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Signature _____ Date _____

