

5 Pedometers

A pedometer is an electronic device that tells you how many steps you walk each day. This tool helps to keep track of your progress as daily totals increase.

The recommended number of steps accumulated each day to achieve health benefits is 10,000 steps or more. However people who progressively increase their number of steps towards 10,000 consistently show improvement in weight, body fat, cholesterol level and overall fitness level. Therefore you should focus on increasing the number of steps week by week and reaching personal goals, rather than aiming straight for 10,000 steps.

How to wear a pedometer

Pedometers are worn on the hip. The exact position changes for each person so you may need to try a few different spots.



Tips for using your pedometer

- Find out 'where you are': wear your pedometer and follow your daily routine. Then record the number of steps you take each day for one week.
- Set some goals: try to increase your first week of walking activity by 20%. Create a walking routine that will help you reach this goal and record your results each day.
- Reach your maximum potential: each week, continue to add 20% onto your goal for the number of steps you take. Alternatively your goal can be to add 200, 500, 1000 steps or more onto your weekly total.
- The key to success in using a pedometer is to set realistic goals each week and to slowly change your activity to meet those goals
- Keep in mind that walking on slopes, up and down stairs, or bent over will affect the accuracy of the pedometer, as steps may not be counted
- Develop a routine for putting on the pedometer first thing in the morning and for recording the steps when you take it off just before bedtime. Keep a pen and your log book in a handy place so you're less likely to forget.
- While it's important to make your goal fit you, people often ask how many steps they should take. Most people will see improvement in their energy level, strength and lung capacity if they increase by 2000 steps per day. That's about 1.5 kilometres or approximately 15 to 20 minutes of walking, something that almost everyone can do.



Acknowledgement

This information has been sourced from the Better Health Channel, Kinect Australia (inc VICFIT in Victoria) through the Go for your life website, and KarateDepot.com, wiseGEEK.com and Missouri Families. See Fact Sheet 11 for details.

Funding for the Community Walking Grants program is made available through the Victorian Government's Community Support Fund.

Calculating your stride length

When entering your stride length the pedometer will calculate the distance walked, and with your weight it can calculate the approximate number of calories burned.

To set your stride length, mark the position of the front of your foot, then take ten normal steps and mark the position of the front of your forward foot. Measure that distance and divide it by ten. If the total distance is 8 metres, then your stride length is 0.8 metres, or 80 centimetres.

When you should use a pedometer

Many people wear their pedometer all day.

You may take 4,000 to 6,000 on an average day. If a long term goal is 10,000 steps a day and a short term goal is 8,000, by walking from a further parking space, walking your children to school, walking your dog, or taking a stroll with a friend during lunch, you can boost the number of steps without making walking a major activity. A pedometer will tell you exactly how many steps you have added. See Fact Sheet 4 for other ideas to increase steps!

Pedometers can also be used just to track your number of steps and distance/calories when taking walks. If the pedometer is keeping you walking or walking more, then it is beneficial to your health.

Where to buy a pedometer

Pedometers can be purchased at various locations. Try the local sports store, chemist, electronics stores, retail outlets, or even try Community Health Services, newsagents, or Post Offices.

More expensive pedometers may have extra features or extended warranties, while some may be just as reliable as cheaper models. So do some shopping around to compare prices, and to also compare which pedometer best suits you.

Pathways Log Book and 10 Week Walking Program

See the Pathways Log Book for a fantastic 10 week walking program. The program is in a simple, easy-to-use format and allows the recording of all walking or physical activities. There is also other interesting information, and a map of the region where you can plot your progress throughout your 10 weeks!

So check out the Pathways Log Book for a great program to start today!



Acknowledgement

This information has been sourced from the Better Health Channel, Kinect Australia (inc VICFIT in Victoria) through the Go for your life website, and KarateDepot.com, wiseGEEK.com and Missouri Families. See Fact Sheet 11 for details.

Funding for the Community Walking Grants program is made available through the Victorian Government's Community Support Fund.