



## Take the First Step... Use a pedometer!!!

Walking is one of the easiest ways to fit physical activity into your day. You don't need any special equipment, it's an activity that we all know how to do and it can be done anytime, anywhere.

Physical activity plays an important role in safe and successful weight loss. Most often, adults are overweight because of an "energy imbalance". In basic terms, more calories (energy) are taken in through eating than the calories (energy) that are burned off through physical activity and other metabolic processes (i.e. breathing, digesting food). If you want to lose weight, you need to burn more calories than the calories you take in through food. If you increase the amount of physical activity in your day, you will increase the number of calories you burn. This will lead to weight loss.

To lose weight, you need 60 minutes of physical activity a day, or about 15,000 steps. To help you keep track of the number of steps you take each day, you can use a tool called a **pedometer**. The pedometer is a good motivator because it provides you with instant feedback; you know right away the number of steps you have taken during a given activity.

### What is a pedometer?

- A pedometer is a small electronic device worn at the hip that keeps track of the number of steps taken.

### Is a pedometer accurate?

- Today's pedometers are very accurate at counting steps.
- But, the research tells us that they are not as accurate at measuring distance and the number of calories burned.
- We recommend that you stick to using the pedometer to count steps.

### Where do I get a pedometer and how much will it cost?

- Pedometers are now available at most sporting goods stores for \$25-\$45

### How many steps should I take?

- The most current research tells us that we need to take 10,000 steps per day for good health, but this number increases to **15,000** steps a day if we want to lose weight. This is not as an easy task. It is important to remember that the **goal is 15,000 steps** and it may take a while to fit that many steps into your day. Do as many as you can and increase gradually each week.

### How do I use the pedometer to track the number of steps I take?

1. Start by wearing the pedometer for one week, doing your normal activities. Record the number of steps you take each day. At the end of the week, add up the total number of steps taken and divide by the number of days you have walked that week to give you an average step count for each day.  
i.e.)  $4200 + 3800 + 4900 + 5200 + 3950 + 4900 + 4100 = 31050 / 7 \text{ days} = 4435$

2. Keeping in mind your daily average from the previous week, come up with a goal for the next week. For example; “I will increase the number of steps I take by 200 steps per day for the next week”. Make sure this goal is based on what you think is realistic for you. This increase in the number of steps should range from 100 to 1000 steps a day.
3. Make a list of ways that you can fit more “steps” into your day. For example, this list could include going for a walk during a work break, walking after dinner, taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking further from work.
4. Continue keeping track of your daily number of steps. At the end of each week, take a look at each day to see if any days stand out. For example, you may notice that you take fewer steps on Tuesday than on other days of the week. Why does this happen? Once you figure out why, come up with some different ideas on ways to fit in more steps.
5. Set a new goal each week and continue to come up with ideas to help you to reach the goal.
6. Before you know it, you will be leading an active lifestyle where physical activity is a priority – for your good health!!!

Below is a form that you can use to track the number of steps you take over the next 6 weeks. The first row allows you to make note of the number of steps you have set as your daily goal for that week. The first column is an example of how to fill in the chart.

	Example Week	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Daily step goal	4,200						
Monday	4,200						
Tuesday	3,800						
Wednesday	4,900						
Thursday	5,200						
Friday	3,950						
Saturday	4,900						
Sunday	4,100						
Weekly Total	31,050						
Days walked	7						
Weekly average	4,435						