

PEDOMETER INFORMATION SHEET FOR ADULTS:

Be Physically Active One Step at a Time!

A pedometer is an excellent tool to help you be physically active on a regular basis and gain health benefits!

This information sheet explains how pedometers work and how to use them correctly.

What is a Pedometer?

A pedometer is a simple, cost-effective device used to measure the number of steps you take in a day.

However, pedometers cannot measure the intensity of the activity, such as how fast a person walks or how hard they are breathing.

How Does a Pedometer Work?

When positioned correctly, a pedometer will record a step each time you move your hip up and down. A pedometer also measures other physical movements or actions that move the hip, such as cycling, running or bending to tie your shoe.

How to Correctly Wear a Pedometer

To measure steps accurately, the pedometer must be attached to your belt or waistband near the front of the hip bone, in line with the kneecap. The pedometer must sit upright to work correctly.

Always test the pedometer, to make sure it is accurately measuring steps.
(Refer to the section on *Testing a Pedometer*).

What if the Pedometer Cannot be Worn Correctly?

Sometimes a person's body shape will not allow the pedometer to sit upright. When this happens it's okay to wear the pedometer in an alternate position.

For example, you could clip the pedometer to the side or back of a waistband or belt, or to a pocket that sits below the waistband.

Note: If the pedometer is placed in an alternate position, be sure to test it before use, to make sure it is accurately measuring steps.



Testing a Pedometer for Accuracy

Use this test to see if the pedometer is in a position where it will work correctly:

1. Clip the pedometer in place.
2. Set it to zero. If it has a cover, close it.
3. Without looking at the pedometer display, walk 20 steps.
4. Check the pedometer reading to see how many steps it recorded, compared to the number of steps you actually took.
5. Was the pedometer right? If not, reposition the pedometer and try again.

Note: the pedometer should be placed in a position where it gives the most reliable results. As your body changes, you may need to repeat this test periodically to make sure your test results are still accurate.

How Will I Benefit from Walking?

Walking offers many health benefits, such as:

- helping to prevent heart disease and stroke by improving cholesterol levels, blood flow, and heart function;
- reducing high blood pressure and preventing adult-onset diabetes by reducing body fat;
- helping to prevent bone loss and osteoporosis; and
- boosting your mood.

To achieve health benefits, follow these tips:

- your walking pace must be at least at a moderate intensity;
- walk for at least 10 minutes at a time, for 30 to 60 minutes a day; and
- walk on most days of the week.

How Do I Get Started and Progress Safely?

Wear the pedometer for three days; then calculate your average daily count. Choose two workdays and one non-workday. Once you know your daily average step count you can think about setting your next goal.

Your daily step-count goal should be:

- appropriate for your current life situation;
- at a realistic level that you can maintain over time; and
- recorded daily, to help keep you motivated to be active.





The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults accumulate **150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity each week**. This can be done in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

Try to gradually increase the number of steps you take each day.

- If you normally average 3,000 steps a day, then you could next aim for 4,000 or 5,000 steps a day.
- When you've reached your early goals and are able to maintain them, you can set fresh goals, e.g., up to 7,000 or higher.

Try to make your steps purposeful and keep your pace at a **moderate intensity**.

Moderate intensity is when your heart rate increases, your breathing gets slightly heavier and you are lightly sweating.

Make your walks fun and interesting. Change it up by taking different routes and choosing paths or trails that you enjoy, such as walking in your community or local parks.

How Many Steps?

There are no official step-count recommendations for adults. The number of steps taken should be part of an overall plan to boost your physical activity levels.

However, many adults use 10,000 steps as an achievable goal. You may also refer to the recommendations in Figure 1.

Looking Forward, Stepping Out

Good luck with using your pedometer to help boost your physical activity levels. Try walking with friends, family members or neighbours; the more the merrier. Aim to have fun every step of the way!

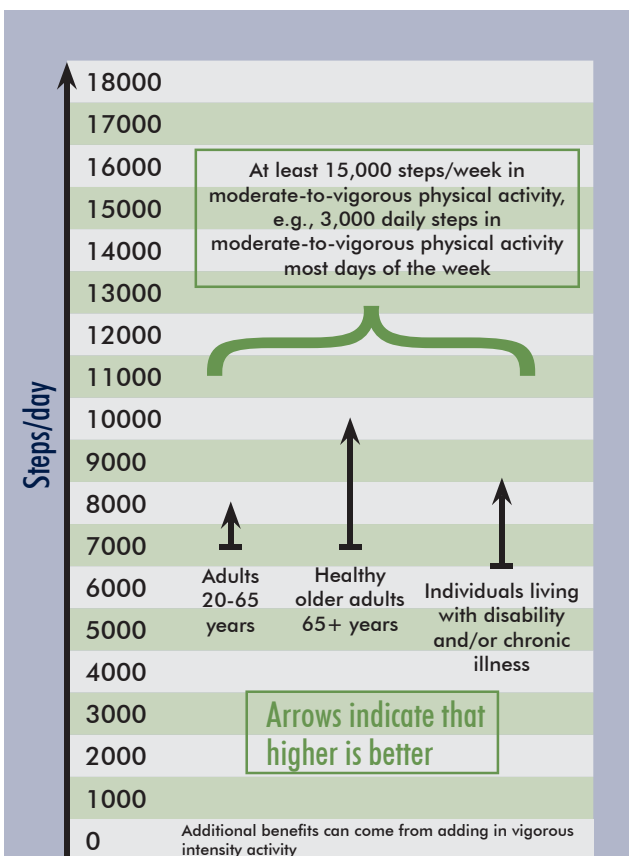


Figure 1. Steps/day scale schematic linked to time spent in MVPA.

Source: How many steps are enough? For adults. Tudor-Locke et al. 2011. Adapted and used with permission.

Looking for More Information about Walking?

- 10,000 Steps
www.10000steps.org.au
An Australian website where you can log on and keep track of your steps. Offers a variety of practical resources.
- 10,000 Steps Conversion Chart
www.10000steps.org.au/pdfs/conversion.pdf
This page provides examples of other activities and their equivalent number of steps.
- How many steps/day are enough for adults?
www.ijbnpa.org/content/8/1/79
Recommendations by Tudor-Locke et al. published in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity 2011, 8:79
- MapWalk
www.mapwalk.com
A great tool that allows you to map walking routes.
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
www.pedbikeinfo.org
A variety of helpful resources; the center is located in North Carolina.
- Steps to Kilometres Conversion Tool
www.walk4life.com/customerservice/forms_stepstomiles.aspx
Use this tool to convert your total steps into kilometres (or miles).
- Walking with Attitude
www.walkingwithattitude.com/challenges_public.php
A popular site based in Australia.

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Alberta Centre for Active Living
11759 Groat Road, Edmonton, Alberta, T5M 3K6
Ph: 780-427-6949
Em: active.living@ualberta.ca.