




Walk Your Way to Fitness with a Pedometer

by the American Institute for Cancer Research

If you have a busy schedule, it's easy to overlook the benefits of daily physical activity. Yet getting some daily exercise not only helps you feel and look better, it has many valuable health benefits.

For lower cancer risk, the American Institute for Cancer Research recommends getting at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day, such as a brisk walk. As your fitness improves, experts advise aiming for 60 minutes of moderate (or 30 minutes of vigorous) physical activity each day. If you're on the job all day, you'll be glad to know the time can be broken up into 10- or 20-minute segments throughout the day to make getting enough easier.

One tool that may help people get more walking into their days is a pedometer. Pedometers are small devices worn at the waist that measure how many steps you take. They can range in cost from \$10 to about \$30. You could try a less expensive one first, then if you find that it helps inspire you to walk more, buy a higher end one. (Some distributors include: Walk-4-Life, www.walk4life.com , 888-422-1806; New Lifestyles, www.new-lifestyles.com ; and Accusplit, 1-800-4935-1996, www.accusplit.com .)

First, find out how much you walk currently by recording your step count on a pedometer for several days without including any extra walking. Then, to work toward the 10,000-step goal that some health professionals say is optimal, add 500 steps a day to your initial starting point. After a week or so, increase your target again.

Studies show that we can add quite a bit of walking to our daily lives with simple changes like taking stairs instead of elevators, parking farther away or getting off the bus a stop or two before your customary one. Go the long way around the block to the store, by way of a park, garden, fountain or other pleasant landmark, instead of taking the shortest way. If you set your pedometer to 0 each morning before you clip it to your waistband or belt, you'll be able to see how many steps you took that day.

Many people find that the little pedometer is a powerful instrument for becoming more fit and keeping excess weight in check. Even if you never reach the 10,000-step a day goal, doing more physical activity during a mostly sedentary day can really boost your health, and a pedometer can help.

For more ideas on getting active, you can to read on-line or order a free copy of AICR's brochure [*Moving More for Cancer Prevention*](#). Visit www.aicr.org, or call 1-800-843-8114, extension 110, 9 am-5pm Monday-Friday Eastern Time.