

# **FIT WALKING INTO YOUR LIFE WITH THE 10,000 STEPS A DAY PROGRAM**

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## **General Information:**

The goal of taking 10,000 steps in a day is a rough equivalent to the recommended 30 minutes of activity most days of the week. This level of activity will help to reduce your risk of heart disease can help you to live a longer, healthier life. Most people will need to build up to 10,000 steps a day rather than start out at this level. The program below provides a guideline for a comfortable, gradual progression of activity over a 4-week period of time.

You will need to invest in a pedometer. Many pedometers provide a variety of settings to count distance walked in miles or calories expended as well as steps taken. For this program, we will use the steps taken mode. Be sure to read the instructions for your pedometer carefully to insure accuracy of measurement. Most pedometers are worn on your waistband lined up with the middle of either your right or left pant crease. Make sure the pedometer is level to the ground, as well, for accurate counting.

## **Week 1:**

Measure your steps in a typical week. Don't try to walk more than normal. Each morning, reset the pedometer to "0". Wear it all day from the moment you get up until you go to bed, except when immersed in water. When you remove it at night, record the number of steps you've taken. Note if you have done any formal exercise that day, for example "20-minute treadmill walk" or if there is a reason for more or less steps that day "meeting all day" or "gallery walk tonight". At the end of this week, add steps for all seven days. Divide by 7. Multiply by 1.2. This is your goal for the next week.

## **Week 2:**

Your goal is to boost your average daily steps by 20%. Find ways throughout your day to add steps – take stairs instead of elevators, park farther away from the building, walk to your colleague's office to speak to him/her rather than call or e-mail them, or take a walk on your lunch hour. At the end of this week, once again total your steps, divide by 7 and multiply by 1.2.

## **Week 3:**

If you haven't reached 10,000 steps, or if your goal is substantial weight loss (in which case you many experts recommend 12,000 to 15,000 steps per day) you may need to add some formal exercise into your day. This may include a 20-30 minute walk in the morning or evening outdoors or on a treadmill.

## **Week 4 and beyond:**

Some people find that just with three weeks of effort they've reached their steps/day goal and are walking 10,000 or more steps per day. But many find it takes several more weeks of boosting by 20% each week until they can create a 10,000 step a day habit. Even if you only try for 10% more each week, you'll soon find your days are full of opportunities for more steps. You'll also find that in short order you won't need a pedometer to tell you how you are doing.

*Steven N. Blair, et al, Active Living Every Day, Human Kinetics, 2001.*