



Using a pedometer

A pedometer is a device that counts each step a person takes by detecting the motion of the person's hips. Using a pedometer can motivate you to be active on a regular basis by tracking your steps and setting walking goals. Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that Canadians be moderately- vigorously active at least 150 minutes a week, in 10-minute bouts at a time or more.

Get started

Before you begin tracking your activity with a pedometer, you'll want to position it properly by following these important steps:

- Place the unit on your waistband as close as possible to the top point of your hipbone.
- Ensure that the pedometer remains upright and secure to correctly record the number of steps you take.

To set your goal, you'll need to know how far you walk every day as a baseline. Here's how to figure that out:

- Wear your pedometer all day for the first week.
- At the end of each day, record the number of steps you took.
- Add up all of the steps you recorded over the past seven days and divide the total sum by seven to determine your daily average.

Over the coming weeks, track your weekly progress and try to increase your steps gradually by 10% to 20% or more. For example, if you walk 20 minutes a day, increase your time by two to four minutes.

Set a goal: make every step count

The number of steps you take is just one part of the equation; quality of step is another. Striving to reach 10,000 or more steps per day is an excellent first goal.

Try to achieve about 3,000 of your total steps in activities that average approximately 100 steps per minute, or more, to gain health benefits. Your pace may be a little higher or lower depending on your stride length, but the goal is to increase the intensity of some of your daily activity. Start by planning 10-minute, 1,000 step sessions a few times a day and work your way up to a single 30-minute, 3,000 step session. Keep in mind that 1 km = 1,200 steps.

Increase the benefits

Once you become more physically active, you will reap more health benefits from walking faster as well as adding more steps to your day. Currently, the average Canadian man accumulates about 9,500 steps per day and Canadian women less than 8,500 steps per day. In both men and women, the amount of steps decreases with age and most of the activity is considered to be “light activity” (cooking, cleaning the house, slow walking), which falls short of the recommended 10,000 steps per day. Here are some ideas for increasing the steps you take every day:

- Park your car further away from your destination.
- Walk your children to school.
- Walk your dog (or a neighbour’s dog).
- Take a walk with a friend or co-worker at lunch.
- Take the stairs.
- Start or join a walking club.
- Wear your pedometer even when you are doing housework or gardening at home.

http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.ikiQLcMWJtE/b.7627891/k.4917/Healthy_living_Using_a_pedometer.htm