

# *Think fit!* Pedometer challenge

A guide for participants and team captains

# Pedometer challenge

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This guide tells you all about the *Pedometer challenge* – a great way to have fun, increase the amount of activity you do each day, and help your health.

### Your *Pedometer challenge* goal is to walk 10,000 steps a day!

You can use a pedometer to count the number of steps you take each day. A pedometer is fun, and easy to use.

## Why 10,000 steps a day?

While any increase in activity will benefit your health, achieving a total of 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity a day on 5 or more days a week will produce the best long-term benefits for most people. One way of helping you to achieve the recommended 30 minutes a day is to aim to take 10,000 steps a day. On average people take between 3,000 and 5,000 steps a day, but this isn't enough.

10,000 steps a day may not be a realistic goal for everyone. If you are very overweight or have other health problems, you may need to set a more appropriate goal. If you are unsure, talk to your doctor.

For some people, the goal of 10,000 steps may be too low. If this is the case, try to add 500 steps every time you feel you need a new challenge. Or you can make your walks more challenging: try to walk up hills, or walk faster, or walk with arm or leg weights.

## Walk 10,000 steps a day...

All you need is a good pair of shoes and you are ready to take a step in the right direction. Follow these three simple steps to reach your 10,000 steps goal.

### Step 1 – Record a baseline

Using your pedometer, record how many steps you take each day for seven days. This is your 'baseline week'.

### Step 2 – Set your daily and weekly step goal

Based on the highest daily number of steps you walked in your baseline week, calculate your daily and weekly steps goals:

What's the highest number of steps you walked on any one day in your baseline week? \_\_\_\_\_ This is your *Daily steps goal*.

Multiply your *Daily steps goal* by 7 (days in a week). \_\_\_\_\_ This is your *Weekly steps goal*.

### Step 3 – Walk 10,000 steps a day!

When you begin walking, to avoid feeling the strain of a new routine, start out slowly and build up gradually.

Fill in the *Pedometer challenge record sheet* on page 3 to see the progress you are making.

If you reach your goal, add another 500 steps or more to your daily walking goal. Continue to record your steps so you can see the progress you are making. Keep setting yourself new daily or weekly goals and you'll soon be walking 10,000 steps a day.

## Keeping going

Think of ways to add steps to your day. For some tips and ideas read *Ways to add steps to your day* below.

If you need some extra motivation, think of a reward you can give yourself when you achieve your goal – for example, a new pair of walking shoes, a new walking top, a new CD, or a trip out for the day. Keep this reward in mind when you need some extra motivation, and try to remember the good feelings you experience when you are active.

### Why walk?

Walking is an ideal activity for improving health. Just walk more and feel the difference. You can walk any time, anywhere and it's free and easy to do. Walking is also safe. You can choose your own level by starting slowly and building up gently, increasing the distance and pace at which you walk.

#### Walking can help you:

- feel better and look good
- increase energy levels
- improve sleep
- strengthen your heart and circulation
- save money
- enjoy the environment
- increase confidence and self-esteem
- reduce stress levels
- manage your weight
- improve body functions
- make friends and experience social benefits.

## Ways to add steps to your day

Add steps to your day. Think creatively! Think of walking as a way to have fun, get jobs done and socialise with friends. Here are a few ideas to add steps to your day. Why not walk:

- to the furthest photocopier, bin or bathroom
- with friends or colleagues before or after work
- all or some of the way to work
- at lunchtime
- up the stairs (avoid using the lift or escalator for less than three flights)
- to pass on a message to a colleague (avoid sending e-mails to colleagues in the same building)
- after your evening meal (avoid sitting watching the television for long periods of time)
- the long way to the shops
- to talk to a friend or colleague
- up the stairs as often as possible
- from the furthest end of the car park
- to brainstorm ideas with colleagues.

Find out what other people are doing. Talk to friends about walking and incorporate walking into your social life.

## Take care... be safe

- Choose comfortable, supportive shoes, such as running, walking, or cross-training shoes
- If you're going for a longer walk, warm up with stretching exercises and include a cool-down period to reduce stress on your heart and muscles
- Maintain a brisk pace. You should work hard to keep up your pace but still be able to talk while walking
- Practise correct posture – head upright, arms bent at the elbow and swinging as you stride
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after walking to cool working muscles and keep your body hydrated
- Tell others if you are walking alone
- Walk in well-lit areas, where it is fairly busy
- Be careful of traffic
- Wear reflective clothing in the dark.

## Pedometer challenge Record sheet

To see the progress you are making, enter your weekly steps goal and record your daily and weekly steps totals on this record sheet.

At the end of each week, hand in your *Pedometer challenge record sheet* to your challenge 'champion' so that he or she can keep a record of your total.

<b>Week 1</b> Dates:		<b>Daily steps total:</b>							
<b>Week 2</b> Dates:		<b>Daily steps total:</b>							
<b>Week 3</b> Dates:		<b>Daily steps total:</b>							
<b>Week 4</b> Dates:		<b>Daily steps total:</b>							
<b>Week 5</b> Dates:		<b>Daily steps total:</b>							
<b>Week 6</b> Dates:		<b>Daily steps total:</b>							
<b>Week 7</b> Dates:		<b>Daily steps total:</b>							
<b>Week 8</b> Dates:		<b>Daily steps total:</b>							
<b>Weekly steps goal</b>									
	Monday								
	Tuesday								
	Wednesday								
	Thursday								
	Friday								
	Saturday								
	Sunday								
	<b>Weekly steps total</b>								

## Pedometer challenge: Extra information for team captains

### Role of the team captain

As a team captain your role is to encourage each team member to walk 10,000 steps a day and help your team complete a virtual walk.

You have an important leadership role to play as team captain. Your enthusiasm and encouragement will help motivate your team members and impact on the success of the team.

### Steps to team success

Arrange to meet up with your team members and decide which virtual challenge walk to complete.

Advise team members to register for the challenge immediately. Each team member should have a copy of this *Guide for participants*.

Talk to team members and decide on the best way to accumulate and record your team's progress.

During the challenge, communicate team progress to members on a regular basis.

Provide a team record sheet to the challenge champion.

Organise regular team meetings, meet over lunch or go for a walk once a week. As a team, why not plan different activities to do together and help each other complete the challenge?

Celebrate your team's success!

