



NEWS RELEASE

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10,000 Steps a Day

We all know that exercise and a healthy diet reduces our risk for several diseases and helps us live healthier lives. Walking is an easy way to increase physical activity, but how much should you walk? Many exercise experts recommend that people walk 10,000-steps a day. Researchers in Arizona explored the appropriateness of using 10,000-steps per day as a physical activity target for women who do not exercise.

The researcher enlisted a group of working women (ages 30-55) who do not exercise and asked them to wear pedometers over a 4-week period. The pedometers counted each step the women took. Each night the women recorded the number of steps they had taken during the day. The women also recorded their pedometer counts before and after two 30-minute brisk walks which they were instructed to perform each week. On their non-walk days, the women averaged 7,220 steps per day. On their walking days however they averaged 10,030 steps a day.

The 30-minute brisk walks added an average of 3,104 steps a day. In addition, on those days when the 30-minute brisk walk was prescribed, a significantly greater proportion of the women achieved the 10,000-step level. While these findings support using 10,000 steps per day as a challenging behavioral target for sedentary women, the researcher suggest that higher or lower step count targets may be needed, depending on a woman's baseline level of activity.

It is recommended that you walk 30 minutes a day most days of the week. You can start out with shorter walks or less frequent walks and gradually increase the amount of time you walk. How to stay motivated? Here are some ideas:

- Walk with a friend or a group of people. This really works and helps make walking something you look forward to. Recruit a family member, friend or someone in the neighborhood. You can also recruit walking partners from church groups or other organizations you belong to.
- Use a pedometer and keep a logbook. It is motivating to chart your progress over time.
- Join a local chapter of the American Volkssport Association. The American Volkssport Association promotes health, fun, and fellowship through non-competitive walking events for everyone. For more information go online (www.ava.org) or write them at 1001 Pat Booker Rd. Suite 101, Universal City, TX 78148.
- Join an online walking club to chat with other walkers about walking, share experiences, triumphs, ask questions, and encourage each other. Online clubs are a good back up when you can't find local walking companions. You are likely to locate an expert or experienced walker to give you advice and many offer online tutorials and coaching that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Join the people who walk the local mall before it opens in the morning.
- Set goals and reward yourself for reaching your exercise goals.
- Don't like to walk with people? Get a dog and walk with him/her every day.

Referenced from: Catherine Lamp, UCCE Tulare County; Source: <http://walking.about.com/library/weekly/aa020700a.htm> and USC Prevention Center Notes - Jan/Feb 2002