

Steps for steps

Practical ways to help you hit your 10K daily total

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The concept of hitting 10,000 steps a day has been around for decades and is now one of the most well-known public health messages out there.

This common guideline was born in 1965 when a Japanese company created a device named Manpo-kei, which translates to "10,000 steps meter." You'd assume that this figure would have come from years of scientific research, wouldn't you? Well, no. The name was essentially a marketing tool, but it has since proven the test of time with consequent studies finding that 10,000 steps a day is definitely better for your health than doing nothing at all.

Stepping out on a 30-minute walk each day can increase cardiovascular fitness, strengthen bones, reduce excess body fat, and boost muscle power and endurance. It can also reduce your risk of developing conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers.

And it's not just your body that benefits - the way you think and feel changes too. Moderate exercise such as walking can put you in a better mood, improve concentration, and help manage and anxiety and stress.

Unfortunately, less than 1 on 5 American adults reach the 10,000 steps benchmark each day. If you're desk-bound for most of the day and sedentary for most of the night, this target can seem difficult to reach. If you're struggling to inject enough movement into your day, here are a few easy and effective ways to hit 10,000 steps.

- Start by tracking your steps. Regularly using a step tracker will not only help count the number of steps you are taking, it will also help you stay accountable. Realizing you've only clocked up 2,000 steps for the day and it's already 3 p.m. might provide that extra motivation you need to go on an af-



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ternoon walk and get your body moving.

- Go on an active date. The next time you're planning to catch up with a friend or partner, make it an active date. It could be as simple as a walk around the block or a stroll along the beach.

- Household chores. Just in case you needed some extra motivation to do your chores ...

- 30 minutes of shopping at 67 steps/minute = 2,010 steps.

- 15 minutes of mopping at 101 steps/minute = 1,510 steps.

- 15 minutes of vacuuming at 94 steps/minute = 1,410 steps.

- 30 minutes of yard work at 89 steps/minute = 2,670 steps.

Also, when unloading grocery bags from the car or carrying laundry to the bedroom, it's tempting to try to take as few trips as possible. Instead, try taking one more trip than you absolutely have to.

- Finally, create a step challenge with friends and family. Who doesn't love a challenge? Get your competitive juices flowing and create a competition with your friends, family or partner and see who can get the most steps in a day, week or month.

Angie Ferguson is an exercise physiologist and Tony Robbins Results Coach from Fort Myers, Florida. She also is a Corrective Biomechanics Specialist, USA Triathlon Advanced Level 2 coach, USA Cycling coach, has a Specialty in Sports Nutrition certification, and a PhD in results! For more training tips, contact her at www.gearedup.biz