



WALK THIS

THE ROAD TO BETTER HEALTH BEGINS W

Have you ever stopped to think about how many steps you take in a day and what that might mean to your overall health?

I often feel like I must have walked 10 million steps over the course of a busy day at work and throughout the evening as I herd my children around to various activities. But how do we really know? And what does our number of steps really mean when compared to the new recommended guidelines for physical activity?

Lucky for us, we don't have to go around counting our steps quietly under our breath as we move about. A pedometer does it for us. It is a simple, inexpensive device that can be used to measure the number of steps we take in a day. It is worn on your waistband close to your hip similar to a pager (if you remember them from years past) and when positioned correctly, your pedometer records a step each time your hip moves.

Now that we are tracking our steps, what is a reasonable goal? It is recommended that a healthy adult should strive for 10,000 or more steps a day to achieve health benefits. Ten thousand steps a day equals about eight kilometres or one hour and 40 minutes of walking. Keep in mind that the length of your stride and the pace at which you walk will impact your results. The longer your stride, the more distance you will cover in the same amount of time as someone with a smaller stride.

One of the limitations of using a pedometer is that it doesn't capture the intensity of your steps. Whether you are running or out for a leisurely walk, a pedometer will only record the number of steps you have taken. So, it is important to keep in mind that a portion of your steps should be taken at a moderate or vigorous intensity, which falls in line with Canada's new physical activity guidelines recommending that adults engage in at least 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Also, because pedometers can only measure the steps that you take, they cannot be used to measure all types of physical activities

such as biking, swimming or yoga. Check out the "Turning Activity Into Steps" chart to see how various activities translate into steps.

When getting started, wear your pedometer each day and keep track of your daily step totals by writing them down on a calendar. At the end of the week, determine your daily average by adding your seven daily step totals and divide by seven. This average will balance out your more active days with less active days and act as your baseline. From your baseline, you can set realistic goals to gradually build up to 10,000 steps or more by increasing your daily total by 10 per cent each week. For instance, if you are new to physical activity or have a sedentary desk job, you may find your daily average is about 3,000 steps. A realistic goal would be to add 10 per cent or 300 steps to your daily number – making your daily goal in week two 3,300 steps.

Every step is a step in the right direction!

Kristine Hayward is a co-ordinator with Winnipeg *in motion*.

Winnipeg

in motion
Physical Activity - do it for life!

Buying a pedometer

When buying a pedometer, look for one that:

- Has a protective flap that covers the display and reset button
- Includes a secure clip and extra safety strap.

When buying a pedometer, you usually get what you pay for. They range in price from free promotional giveaways to more than \$100.

SWAY

WITH 10,000 STEPS A DAY



Turning Activity Into Steps

The chart below allows you to convert time spent doing a non-walking activity into an approximate number of steps. Multiply the number of minutes spent doing an activity by the conversion factor. For example, swimming for 20 minutes = 20 x 203 = approximately 4,060 steps.

Activity	Conversion Factor
Aerobics (low impact – step)	145 - 246
Biking (leisurely – moderate)	116 – 203
Dancing	131
House Work	101
Stretching	72
Swimming	203
Weight Lifting (moderate – vigorous)	87- 174
Yard Work	145
Yoga	72

For more information on using a pedometer or participating in the Walk for Wellness pedometer Challenge, visit winnipeginmotion.ca or call 940-3648.



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