

Getting the Most Out of Your Step Counter or Pedometer

Step counters, also known as pedometers, are terrific ways to help you increase your physical activity.

- **Self-assessment:** Pedometers measure how active, or not active, you are in your everyday life
- **Motivation:** Trying to beat yesterday's step count is a great way to keep motivated
- **Feedback:** Pedometers record your step count in real time, so you know exactly how you're doing

Health Benefits

- Step counts are directly related to how many calories you burn each day
- Each step (walking) helps to improve your insulin sensitivity
- Total weekly step count helps to improve blood sugar control in people with prediabetes or diabetes

Step Counter Choices

It's not necessary to buy an expensive pedometer with a lot of extra features (eg, calorie counter, heart rate monitor, etc.). A simple, durable device that counts your steps is all you need. Some models are available for as little as \$15.

Examples

Digiwalker: <http://thepedometercompany.com/pedometers.html>

Accusplit: <http://www.accusplit.com/PedometerShowAllProducts.aspx>

Omron: <https://omronhealthcare.com/fitness/activity-trackers-and-pedometers/>

Wearing a Step-Counter

The most important aspect of wearing a step counter is to put it on each morning and wear it daily. Other tips include:

- Wear as close to the body as possible
- Wear device perpendicular to the ground (straight up and down)
- Position on your left or right hip—over the foot
- Wear it in the same place every day
- Use a clip and safety leash are very helpful
- Record steps and reset daily



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The 10,000 Step Goal

Adults should get 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity at least 5 days a week to reduce their risk for chronic disease. If you're logging 10,000 steps a day, you are probably meeting this guideline.

2,000 steps = 1 mile

10,000 steps = 5 miles = 300-400 calories

Number of Steps per Day	Activity Classification
<5,000	Sedentary
5,000 to 7,499	Low active
7,5000 to 9,999	Somewhat active
>10,000	Active
>12,000	Very active

Recommended Weekly Step-Count Progression

1. Establish a baseline of the steps you take over 3 to 4 days
2. Gradually increase your step count by about 2,000 steps over the next 2 weeks
3. Continue to gradually increase your step count by about 2,000 steps over the next 2 weeks
4. Keep adding steps gradually until you reach 10,000 per day
5. If you have not been physically active for a long time, increase your steps more slowly

Goal for Weight Loss

15,000 steps per day = 70,000 steps per week



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Troubleshooting

Sometimes pedometers/step counters do not record steps the same way for people with obesity as they do for people with a normal weight. If your step counter seems to be recording a lower step count than you believe is correct, you can check its performance by walking a known distance and seeing how many steps the pedometer has recorded.

- Go to a track circling a middle or high school football field.
- Walk 4 times around the track, wearing your pedometer on your left or right hip; 4 laps of the track should equal 2,000 steps.
- If step-counter shows <500 or >3,000 steps try the following:
 - Clip the pedometer to your underwear, not the waistband of your pants
 - Clip the step-counter to the waistband of your pants in the middle of your back
- If your step-counter shows about 1,000 steps, it is counting only every other step, which sometimes happens with people who have obesity. In this case, your actual number of steps each day will be double the pedometer's reading, or

~1,000 steps = 1 mile for people with obesity

