

# Walking Information

According to a recent report just released by the Centers for Disease Control, 7 in 10 Americans do not receive enough physical activity. Why is exercise important? The benefits of exercise are profound and proven. Exercise doesn't have to be complicated; it's as easy as walking!

## **BENEFITS OF WALKING**

- Burns calories
- Strengthens back muscles
- Slims your waist
- Easy on your joints
- Strengthens your bones
- Lowers blood pressure
- Allows time with family and friends
- Shapes and tones your legs & butt
- Cuts cholesterol
- Reduces risk of heart disease, diabetes, & more
- Reduces stress
- Enhances sleep
- Improves mood & outlook on life
- Can be done almost anywhere
- Requires no equipment
- AND it's Free

## **10,000 STEPS**

How many steps do you walk each day? Maybe you have heard the guidelines about walking 10,000 steps per day.

How far is 10,000 steps anyway? The average person's stride length is approximately 2.5 feet long. That means it takes just over 2000 steps to walk one mile, and 10,000 steps is close to 5 miles.

If you are a sedentary person you may only average about 2000 to 3000 steps a day. Adding steps has many health benefits including weight control, improved blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and a decrease in the risk of cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and heart disease.

A reasonable goal for most people is to increase average daily steps each week by 500 per day until you can easily average 10,000 per day. (Example: If you currently average 3000 daily steps your week one goal is 3500 each day. Week 2 goal is 4000 each day. Continue to increase each week and you should be averaging 10,000 steps by the end of 14 weeks.)

Wearing a pedometer is an easy way to track your steps. Start by wearing the pedometer every day for one week. Put it on when you get up in the morning and wear it until bed time. Record your daily steps in a log or notebook. By the end of the week you will know your average daily steps. You might be surprised how many (or how few) steps you get in each day.

## **Ways To Increase Your Daily Steps**

(Easy ways during your work day)

- Take a walk with your spouse, child, or friend
- Walk the dog
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Park farther from the office/store
- Walk instead of taking the shuttle
- Better yet, walk to the store
- Walk over breaks/lunch
- Get up to change the channel (lose the remote or turn off the TV.)
- Window shop
- Plan a walking meeting
- Walk over to visit a neighbor
- Get outside to walk around the garden or do a little weeding

If you are in very poor physical condition or at any point you feel that you are progressing too rapidly, slow down a bit and try smaller increases. If you have any health concerns seek your physician's advice prior to starting or changing your exercise routine.

Any comments or suggestions regarding this web page can be emailed to [rpruch@unmc.edu](mailto:rpruch@unmc.edu)

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