

Fitness Walking With a Pedometer – The 20% Boost Program

Pick your goal. Eventually build up to: 10,000 steps per day for health.
 12,000 to 15,000 steps per day for weight loss.
 For aerobic fitness try for 3,000 to 6,000 of your daily steps at increased speed.

WEEK #1 (Measure your "baseline" steps in a typical week.) **Don't change your routine; ignore the pedometer.**

Date:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Steps Today:							

Total # of steps for the 7 days _____ Divide by seven _____ Average steps week #1 _____

WEEK #2 (Boost your average daily steps by 20%) **Start with the easy stuff—a step here, a step there.**
 Average steps week #1 _____ Multiply by 1.2 _____ Goal average for week #2 _____

Date:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Steps Today:							

Total # of steps for the 7 days _____ Divide by seven _____ Average steps week #2 _____

Seek easy ways to add steps: get off the train a stop early, take the stairs, grab a five-minute stroll (good for 500 steps).

Week #3 (Try for another 20% boost.) **Look for opportunities to add steps all the time.**
 Average steps week #2 _____ Multiply by 1.2 _____ Goal average for week #3 _____

Date:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Steps Today:							

Total # of steps for the 7 days _____ Divide by seven _____ Average steps week #3 _____

Get in the walking habit: walk to get the daily paper or to your post office box, recruit a walking partner (it's proven to help).

Rough rule of thumb: 2000 steps per mile

Week #4 (Boost by 20% again if you haven't reached your goal.)
 Average steps week #3 _____
 Multiply by 1.2 _____

Begin building routine steps into your life!
 Goal average for week #4 _____

Date:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Steps Today:							

Total # of steps for the 7 days _____ Divide by seven _____ Average steps week #4 _____

Boost your steps permanently: leave the car behind, commute on foot; stroll for errands; walk the kids to school or a friend's.

Week #5 (Keep on boosting until you reach your daily goal.)
 Average steps week #4 _____
 Multiply by 1.2 _____

Think about ways to make a "step-friendly" world.
 Goal average for week #5 _____

Date:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Steps Today:							

Total # of steps for the 7 days _____ Divide by seven _____ Average steps week #5 _____

Help build a more walkable world: lobby for sidewalks and crosswalks, help build or maintain a trail, be walking a role model.

This may be the hardest, but most important "step." For many people, their community isn't that friendly to walking—sidewalks are missing or in disrepair, traffic is intimidating, worthy walking destinations are few and far between. But all of these things can be changed over time. The best way to build more physical activity into your day is to build a community that invites you to be out and about on foot all the time. Here are a few resources:

- To learn about walkable settings and how to build them, and to download a walkability checklist: www.walkinginfo.org
- For information on trails and greenways: www.railtrails.org; www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/trails.htm
- To learn more about the benefits of good nutrition and physical activity: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/
- For creative walk to school programs and extensive resources: www.walktoschool.org

Where do I get a pedometer?

Yamax digital pedometers, called Digiwalkers, are recognized to be one of the most accurate and consistent lines of pedometers. They can be found in many sporting goods stores as Digiwalkers, or as Accusplit Eagle digital pedometers (the same product with a different name). For direct sales or for bulk pricing, contact:

- Optimal Health Products: 888-339-2067; www.optimalhealthproducts.com
- New Lifestyles: 888-748-5377; www.digiwalker.com
- Accusplit: (800) 935-1996; www.accusplit.com

Accusplit also markets simple but reliable analog pedometers; slightly less accurate than the digital devices, but ideal for bulk purchases and as prizes, since they retail for about \$10. (Put a safety string through any pedometer's waist clip and pin it or loop it through a belt loop, so the pedometer isn't lost or dropped down a toilet.)

In general, most people only need a pedometer that measures steps. That's quite sufficient for the 20% Boost program shown here. Some pedometers will estimate the distance, but that depends on you accurately measuring and entering your stride length (and then you walking at the same speed you measured, since stride length increases with increasing speed). Some even estimate calories burned, but such estimates are notoriously inaccurate. So don't feel compelled to invest in those added features.

How do I estimate walking distance most accurately?

After a walking at least five minutes to warm up, reset the pedometer and walk around a quarter-mile track at your normal walking speed. Multiply that number of steps by four, to get your typical number of steps per mile. (For greater accuracy walk a full mile—four times around the track). Now to estimate any distance you've walked, just divide the total number of steps you've taken by your "steps per mile" calibration. Keep in mind it's just an estimate, because the length of your stride increases as you walk faster. So, on faster walks you may underestimate the distance somewhat, and on slower walks you'll overestimate a bit. Some pedometers allow you to enter your step length and they will calculate your distance automatically (see the example), but don't on the calorie counts to be at all accurate, as they're based on very gross averages.

EXAMPLE: Jan wears her pedometer for a walk around the quarter-mile track—it counts 473 steps. She multiplies by four, to estimate that she takes 1892 steps a mile. (For ease, she calls it 1900 steps.) Another day she takes a walk and covers 6,685 steps. Jan divides 6,685 by 1900, and gets 3.52, or about three and a half miles.

To calculate a step length, divide the known distance you've walked in feet by the number of steps you've taken. A quarter mile walk is 1,320 feet long (a mile is 5,280 feet). So Jan divides 1,320 feet by her 473 steps, learns each step is 2.79 feet long, and can enter that into a pedometer if needed.

How do I add 100 steps? - It only takes a minute. Literally!

- Do jumping jacks, jump rope, or just walk around the house for the length of a TV commercial break
- Walk out and check for the mail (if your mailbox isn't at your front door)
- Take out the trash, bundle up the recyclables, dust the tops of your kitchen cabinets (and the 'fridge).
- Pace—don't sit—while talking on the telephone
- Hide the garage door remote control—open it by hand
- Go down every aisle in the grocery store, even if you don't have to

How do I add 1,000 steps? - Invest 10 minutes to get an extra 1K

- Use the bathroom on another floor (up or downstairs) at work
- Get a push mower, and break the yard up into 10-minute chunks
- Wash the car—by hand
- Walk, rather than drive, your child to a friend's house to play
- Get a dog (Don't worry—it will make *sure* you get your steps)
- Vacuum two or three rooms, with vigor
- **How fast am I walking?** - Count your steps for one minute, then estimate:
 110-120 steps/minute: ~3.0 mph 125-135 steps/minute: ~4.0 mph 145-150 steps/minute: > ~4.5 mph
 (~40 steps in 20 secs.) (~45 steps in 20 secs.) (~50 steps in 20 secs.)

For more, see *The Complete Guide to Walking for Health, Weight Loss, and Fitness*, by Mark Fenton (Lyons Press, 2001)