



## **PEDOMETER INFORMATION SHEET: GETTING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE ONE STEP AT A TIME!**

### **What is a Pedometer?**

A pedometer is a simple device used to measure the number of steps you take in a day.

### **How Does a Pedometer Work?**

When positioned correctly, your pedometer records a step each time your hip moves up and down. Your pedometer also measures things you do throughout your day in addition to walking, e.g., bending to tie your shoes.

### **How Do I Wear It?**

Attach the pedometer to your belt or waistband near the front of your hipbone, in line with your kneecap.

### **Creative Ways to Wear Your Pedometer**

If you're wearing a dress or other clothing that doesn't have a waistband, you can clip the pedometer to the waistband of your underwear.

The pedometer must stay upright to work correctly. If your body shape causes the pedometer to tip over, clip it instead to the side or back of your waistband. Women can clip the pedometer to the front of their bra between their breasts.

### **How to Test a Pedometer**

Use this test to see if you're wearing the pedometer in a place that works well:

- clip the pedometer where you want it;
- set it to zero;
- without looking at the pedometer display, walk 20 steps;

- check the pedometer reading to see how many steps it recorded compared to the number of steps you actually took.

Wear your pedometer in the spot that gives you the most reliable results. As your body changes you may need to do the 20-step count test periodically to make sure that you're still getting accurate results.

### **How Will I Benefit from Walking?**

Walking can improve your health if your pace is at least at a moderate intensity, and you walk for at least 10 minutes at a time for 30 to 60 minutes a day, most days of the week.

Walking has many benefits, including

- helping to prevent heart disease and stroke by improving cholesterol levels, blood flow, and heart function;
- reducing high blood pressure and preventing adult-onset diabetes by reducing body fat;
- helping to prevent bone loss and osteoporosis;
- boosting your mood.

### **How Do I Get Started and Progress Safely?**

Ten thousand steps may sound like a lot, but keep in mind that most people cover about half that amount (4,000 to 6,000 steps) in their typical day. You probably only need to come up with another 4,000 to 6,000 steps in a day to reach 10,000. If you're walking at a brisk pace, that's about a 30 to 60 minute walk! This advice fits with Canada's Physical Activity Guide recommendations to

accumulate at least 30 to 60 minutes of additional activity most days of the week.

Wear the pedometer for three days, and calculate your average daily count. Choose two workdays and one non-workday. Your daily step goal should be

- appropriate for your current life situation;
- to improve your average daily count;
- something you can do over a long period of time;
- recorded to help keep you motivated to be active.

Try to gradually increase the number of steps you take each day.

### The 10,000 Step Goal

Taking 10,000 steps a day may result in health benefits for healthy adults. (However, please note that this figure may not be appropriate for all groups, e.g., older adults, people living with chronic diseases, and children.) Walking at least 10,000 steps a day equals about 8 km (5 miles) or 1 hour and 40 minutes of walking. If you've been fairly inactive (averaging fewer than 6,000 steps a day), work gradually towards this goal. Try to make your steps purposeful and of at least moderate intensity.

If you normally average 3,000 steps a day, then you might initially try to reach 4,000 or 5,000 steps a day. When you've reached that goal, work up to 7,000, and then eventually to 10,000. However, walking 10,000 steps is not the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. You can still get more health benefits from walking over 10,000 steps.

Make your walk more interesting by using virtual trails (e.g., those on the [America on the Move](http://aom2.americaonthemove.org/) (<http://aom2.americaonthemove.org/>) or [Walking with Attitude](http://www.walkingwithattitude.com/challenges_public.php) ([www.walkingwithattitude.com/challenges\\_public.php](http://www.walkingwithattitude.com/challenges_public.php)).

### Will My Pedometer Work if I Run?

Yes, pedometers work for running. Keep in mind that the pedometer does not measure intensity of activity, but does still count steps you take when running.

### How Do I Care for My Pedometer?

- Avoid dropping or crushing, as this could break the crystal.
- Avoid excessive moisture.
- Do not force the pedometer clip on to the belt—this may break the clip.
- Change the battery when the digital display fades.

### Looking for More Information about Walking?

- [How can I use a pedometer to help me be active](http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/publications/faq/pedometer.html) (Alberta Centre for Active Living, [www.centre4activeliving.ca/publications/faq/pedometer.html](http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/publications/faq/pedometer.html))
- [Active Transportation](http://www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyPlaces/619.htm) (Healthy U, [www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyPlaces/619.htm](http://www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyPlaces/619.htm))
- [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/) ([www.pedbikeinfo.org/](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/))
- [Health Everyday Living](http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/health/living/activity/walking/pedometer_en.html) (City of Ottawa, [www.ottawa.ca/residents/health/living/activity/walking/pedometer\\_en.html](http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/health/living/activity/walking/pedometer_en.html))



### For more information

Alberta Centre for Active Living  
 11759 Groat Road, Edmonton, Alberta, T5M 3K6  
 Ph: (780) 427-6949  
 Em: (780) [active.living@ualberta.ca](mailto:active.living@ualberta.ca)