

## The 10,000 Step Program to Better Health and Fitness Part II

The 20% Boost Program is basically "easing" into fitting walking into your life. To really measure your progress you will probably need to invest in a pedometer.

**Week 1**The advice is not to change your life at all during this first week. Learn your baseline average daily step total. The goal for the next two weeks is to try and boost that average by 20%. You will need to measure your step sin a typical week. Don't try to walk more than normal. Each morning, reset the pedometer to "0." Set the pedometer to show steps, not distance or calorie counts. Keep the pedometer closed and attached to the front of your waist to the left or right of center. Wear the pedometer all day from the moment you wake up until going to bed. Do not immerse the pedometer in water. At night when you remove the Pedometer, record the number of steps you've taken. Note if you did formal exercise (wear your pedometer through formal exercise). An example of formal exercise would be a 20 minute treadmill walk. Note if there were activities in your day that caused more or fewer steps than usual. An example would be a museum tour or a day where you attended meetings all day. If you exercise on a bicycle, attach the pedometer to your shoe if it does not count the pedaling while attached to your waist.

**Week 2**The goal for week 2 is to boost your average daily steps by 20%. To figure this add the total steps taken in week one and divide by seven, then multiply by 1.2. The answer to this equation is your new target number for daily steps. For example, if you averaged 3,000 steps a day in week one, try for 3,600 a day in week two. Most physical activity counts, including formal workouts and informal exercise. Formal exercise would be a brisk walk or using exercise machines. Informal exercise would be taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking farther from the grocery store and creating a longer walk into the store.

If you have not reached 10,000 steps, or if your goal is weight loss (many experts recommend 12,000 to 15,000 steps a day for substantial weight loss), then boost your steps again by 20%. Calculate your second week's daily average and multiply by 1.2.

**Week 4 and beyond:**Some people are able to average close to or beyond 10,000 steps daily within a three week period. Others find it takes several more weeks of boosting by 20% each week to accomplish the 10,000 step-per-day habit. You can even try for 10% more each week if 20% seems too much until you have reached your 10,000 steps per day goal.

Fitness experts feel for long term health and reduced chronic disease risk you need to practice 10,000 steps per day. For successful weight loss and to be able to keep the weight off you will need to practice 12,000 to 15,000 steps a day. To build aerobic fitness, make 3,000 or more of your daily steps fast.

One quick way to find where to purchase a pedometer is to simply put into the Google search box: Pedometer or Pedometers for sale. Google should then be able to bring you up a list of manufacturers and retailers that sell pedometers.

Try to practice thinking of ways to add more steps to your day. Stairs are a great place to get more steps. Try to always take the stairs instead of the elevator. If your job is within walking distance, try walking to work instead of driving, if not everyday, then a few days a week. And you can always park farther than the department store, grocery stores or any other business you need to go to in order to create more steps for yourself (if the area is safe, open and well lighted).

And what if you are a bit elderly: Regular exercise like the 10,000 steps a day program can help you gain significant improvements in physical functioning and help to reduce the likelihood of disability in the future. Don't put it off any longer. I went for a brisk walk today even though it was a bit chilly. I just bundled up real good, put on a pair of gloves and ear muffs and when I was finished, I did a few Achilles tendon stretches, looked out over the area, and suddenly everything looked clearer. It was uplifting and energizing and I loved it. I was so glad I did not procrastinate myself out of this days walk. The sun was shining. It was a little difficult to return to the keyboard where I thought I rather be today. Sometimes just taking that first step toward the 10,000 steps a day goal is the hardest of all. After step two though, you should be on your way to 10,000 and even more, more, more.....I am 50 and I have got to get serious about exercise routines. I started today! You can too!

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### About the Author

The School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences is the main academic centre in Australia which integrates human nutrition and food science.

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