

Pedometer Information⁵

HOW A PEDOMETER WORKS

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.

What to look for in a pedometer

When you're buying a pedometer, look for one that:

- counts steps accurately
(walk 20 steps with the pedometer on — the display should read 19, 20, or 21 if it is accurate)
- has a cover to protect the display
- includes a belt clip or strap so the pedometer doesn't fall off when you wear it
- uses an inexpensive battery (such as a watch battery).

Many drug stores and sports shops sell pedometers. You can also check with your local library or recreation organizations to see if they have a pedometer lending program.



⁵Adapted from:

Alberta Centre for Active Living <http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/publications/quickfacts/pedinfosheet.htm>

The Canadian Health Network <http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1138646378456&pagename=CHN-RCS%2FC HNResource%2FFAQCHNResourceTemplate&lang=En&repGroupTopic=Active+Living+FAQ&parentid=1048540759782&c=CHNResource>

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.

LET'S GET MOVING!

When it's worn properly, you can use a pedometer to:

- **Get an idea of how active you are.**
Put on the pedometer when you get up in the morning, and take it off just before bedtime.
Record the number of steps you take each day for three days (two workdays and one day you don't work).
Add up the number of steps and divide by three to get the average. Compare your results to the following:
 - Active adults take approximately 7,000 to 13,000 steps per day.
 - Active older adults take approximately 6,000 to 8,500 steps per day.
 - Inactive adults take approximately 3,500 to 5,000 steps per day.
 - Children should take approximately 11,000 to 13,000 steps per day.
- **Help you to set goals for being active.**
Increase your activity in manageable bites. If you normally take about 3,000 steps a day, then your initial goal might be to try to reach 6,000 steps a day. You can do this in three 10-minute bouts of brisk walking (about 1,000 to 1,300 steps at a time).
- **Measure your progress.** Record the number of steps you take to track your progress, so that you know when it's time to set a new goal. For example, once you're consistently taking 6,000 steps a day, you could change your goal to 8,000 and then to 10,000 steps or more per day.



TIP

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 or on the front of your bra.

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.

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.

What Pedometers Can't Do

- Pedometers are most accurate in counting steps. They are less accurate for estimating distance travelled and calories burned.
- Pedometers record a step each time your hip moves up and down. This means the pedometer measures other things you do in addition to walking (e.g., bending to tie your shoes, riding in a car).
- Pedometers don't measure the frequency (how often), intensity (how hard) or duration (how long) you've been physically active. For example, a pedometer can't tell the difference between walking, running or climbing stairs.
- A pedometer can't measure your activity level when you swim, bike or do an exercise where you use just your arms. As a general rule:
 - 10 minutes of moderate intensity activity = 1,000 steps
 - 10 minutes of high intensity activity = 2,000 steps.

Wheelchair users can attach an odometer from a bike shop to their chairs to track the distance they travel. (1 km = about 1,250 steps).

