

Lifestyle Tips



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Increasing Physical Activity Step by Step

Canadians are facing an inactivity crisis that will have an unimaginable impact on our health. Over half of Canadians are considered inactive and overweight or obese. The direct and indirect costs related to physical inactivity are estimated at billions of dollars. More than ever, Canadians need to find ways to get active. It can be as simple as increasing the number of steps you take each day.

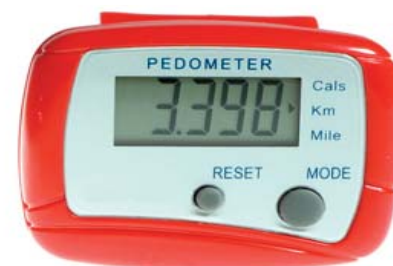
Walking is the top-ranked physical activity for both men and women. Walking is easy to do, can be easily incorporated into your day, and is inexpensive. You can increase your overall health by taking more steps each day. By increasing your amount of daily walking, you are bound to experience the benefits of being active such as reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis, as well as improved mood and greater energy.

But how can you get and stay motivated to walk more? Over the past few years, more Canadians have started using pedometers. Results from a study that evaluated 'Canada on the Move', a national campaign to promote pedometer use and walking, found that Canadians who owned a pedometer and were aware

of the benefits of walking were more likely to engage in sufficient walking to maintain their overall health.

A pedometer is a great tool because it measures the number of steps you take. Some can even estimate the distance you cover or the number of calories you burn. You only need to position the pedometer on your belt or waistband near the front of the hipbone to start recording your steps. You can use a pedometer to help you track all the extra physical activity you incorporate into your daily routine through walking. Try easy ways to increase your daily step count such as:

- taking the stairs instead of the elevator;



- parking further from the store entrance;
- getting off the bus a stop or two early;
- going for walk breaks during the day;
- walking to work, school or to run errands.

Set some daily goals for yourself and use a pedometer to keep track of your progress. As your pedometer measures the increase in your physical activity, you are likely to stay motivated to walk more and to reach your daily physical activity goals.



HOW MANY STEPS HAVE YOU TAKEN TODAY?

Guidelines for adults

- <5000 = sedentary
- 5000-7499 = low active
- 7500-9999 = somewhat active
- 10000 = active
- >12500 = highly active

Source: Catrine Tudor-Locke, Arizona State University, Affiliate Scholar, Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute

