



Walking. It's convenient, affordable, and you already know how to do it. Just lace up a good pair of walking shoes and hit the road, treadmill, mall, track, path, or field. Go at your own pace and set your own goals.

The benefits are big. Walkers are less likely to have cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. They live longer and enjoy physical and mental health benefits.

Before you get started

It's a good idea to start by making a plan. Think about when you can add walking to your schedule. Can you change other activities, take short breaks during the day, or get up a little earlier in the morning? Next, make sure you have a sturdy, comfortable pair of walking shoes.

Try a step counter

A step counter (also called a pedometer) can be a great way to get motivated. This easy-to-wear device senses your body's motion and counts your footsteps. You simply clip it on to your belt, pocket, or waistband in the morning, and at the end of the day you can see how many steps you've taken.

Setting goals

Try wearing the pedometer for one week, and record your steps at the end of each day (use the form on the back of this page). Without much extra effort, many people find they walk 2,000 to 4,000 steps in a normal day.

Look at how many steps you walked the first week, and try adding 50 to 100 steps per day. Do your best and don't be discouraged if you don't reach your goal. Just try again tomorrow. You can also set a goal to increase the speed of your walks or the amount of time you spend walking. A great goal is to work toward 10,000 steps every day. With persistence, you can get there!

How can I start adding steps to my day?

Even a walk to the end of your driveway to get the newspaper can add 100 steps to your pedometer. Try some of these ways to increase your daily distance:

- Run simple errands on foot.
- Get a head start each day by walking first thing in the morning.
- Take several short, 10-minute walks during the day.
- Listen to music while you walk.
- Walk in different places: a park, by the water, in a new neighborhood.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator. And use the restroom or copy machine on a different floor at work.
- Start or join a walking club with friends or co-workers.
- Suggest a "walking meeting" where you walk and talk, instead of meeting over coffee.

How can I stay motivated?

1. Focus on your achievement.

Nothing is more powerful than achieving your goals. This is why it is so important to make changes slowly. Reaching a goal motivates you to stick with it and set your sights even higher. Be patient with yourself. The most important thing is being active.

2. Make it fun.

Walking is a great way to relax, socialize, or have time to yourself. When you can, choose to walk in pleasant surroundings. Spend time with your family by taking a walk after dinner. See how you can make each step more enjoyable.

3. Keep a journal.

Write down your progress in a journal or a log to track your steps day by day. (See the other side of this page.) Write down things that may have prevented you from reaching your goals, and how you could resolve them next time.

Additional resources

- To learn more about physical activity and Kaiser Permanente's 10,000 Steps® Program, visit kp.org/healthyliving.
- Visit your physician's Home Page at kp.org/mydoctor.
- Contact your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department for health information, programs, and other resources.

