

# Step this way for better health!



Public Health Agency



**DHSSPS**

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

*get a life*  *get active*

We all need to be active. Physical activity helps to reduce our risk of many illnesses, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis.

Walking is an ideal form of activity for most people – it's easy to fit in to your day-to-day life, the risk of injury is low, and you don't need any special equipment, just a comfortable pair of shoes.

By using a step counter, you can find out how much you walk already. Keeping a record and setting goals will help motivate you to walk more.

**10,000 steps a day is a good target to aim for if you want to get health benefits from walking.** Don't try to get to 10,000 steps all in one go – build up gradually, making sure you don't overstretch yourself. Not everyone will be able to achieve 10,000 steps a day but even if you can't quite get there, you'll still benefit your health by increasing the number of steps you take each day by as much as you can.

## Getting started with your step counter

### How it works

Your step counter has a built-in pendulum, which registers each step that you take. When the pendulum moves you may hear a clicking sound – this is normal.

### How to attach it

Clip the step counter on to your clothes, ideally close to your hip, on a belt or the top of your waistband. **It needs to be level to record accurately, so don't clip it on at a slant, eg on a side pocket.**



# Building up to 10,000 steps

## Week 1

For the first week, just wear your step counter every day as you go about your normal routine. Keep a record of the number of steps you take each day. You will need to reset the step counter to zero every morning by pressing one of the two buttons on the front. Calculate your daily average by adding up how many steps you've taken over the whole week and dividing by seven.

## Week 2

Set yourself a goal of taking 500 or 1,000 more steps each day than your daily average from Week 1. Use the log provided to record your goal, your daily totals and your daily average for the week. If you're starting from a low average (eg 2,000) then 500 extra steps is a good target, but if you're a little bit more active and you already take say 5,000 steps a day, then you could try increasing your daily average by 1,000.

## Week 3 onwards

Continue to add 500 or 1,000 steps to your daily goal each week, building towards achieving 10,000 steps each day. Continue recording your progress on the log to help you keep motivated.

# Ten tips for taking more steps!

- 1 If you're heading somewhere local, walk rather than take the car or the bus.
- 2 In the supermarket carpark, choose a space in the row furthest away from the entrance.
- 3 Walk up and down while you're talking on the phone.
- 4 Ignore lifts and escalators – always take the stairs.
- 5 Instead of catching up with friends over a coffee, meet them for a walk.
- 6 Get off the bus or train one stop before your usual one and walk the rest of the way.
- 7 Instead of emailing or phoning a colleague, walk over to their desk.
- 8 Help out a friend or neighbour by offering to walk their dog.
- 9 Find a route near your office or home where you can go for a brisk 15 minute walk at lunchtime to get a bit of fresh air.
- 10 Have a meeting while walking rather than sitting in the office.

# Your daily step log



Pin this log somewhere you'll see it every day to remind you to record your steps

Week	Daily goal	Actual steps							Total for week	Daily average
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
Week 1										
Week 2										
Week 3										
Week 4										
Week 5										
Week 6										
Week 7										
Week 8										
Week 9										
Week 10										

For more information on getting active, check out [www.getlifegetactive.com](http://www.getlifegetactive.com)