



Step Counters

Using a pedometer to count your steps

Benefits of using a step counter:

- Helps you to realize how active or inactive you are in your everyday life.
- Acts as a motivator.
- Provides feedback right away.

Health Benefits of a Step-Counter

- Step counts are directly related to how many calories you burn each day.
- Each step (walking) helps to improve your insulin sensitivity.
- Total weekly step count is directly related to the reduction in metabolic risk (in other words, it helps improve your blood glucose control).

Why take 10,000 steps?

- It is recommended that adults get 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity at least 5 days each week to reduce their risk for disease. If you are getting 10,000 steps a day, you are likely meeting this guideline.
- 2,000 steps = 1 mile
- 10,000 steps = 5 miles

How to Choose a Step Counter

- Go for simple and durable.
- Only needs to count steps – does not need to count calories, measures strides, or do anything else.

Here is a list of moderately priced brands and models, most under \$30:

- Digiwalker – www.digiwalker.com
 - SW-200
- Accusplit – www.accusplit.com
 - Accusplit Eagle 2720
 - Accusplit Eagle 120XL
- Omron – www.onlinefitness.com
 - Omron HJ-112

How to Use a Step Counter

Wear your step counter:

- As close to the body as possible.
- Straight up and down – perpendicular to the ground.
- On your left or right hip, over the foot.
- In the same place every day.

Also:

- Put your step counter on every morning.
- Use the clip and safety leash, if needed.
- Record your day's steps and reset the counter every night when you take it off.

If your step counter does not seem to be working, here is a way to test it:

1. Drive to a nearby school track with a quarter-mile track.
2. Wear your step counter over your left or right hip.
3. Walk 4 times around the track – this should be about 2,000 steps.
4. If your step counter shows about 1,000 steps, this means it is only counting every other step, which sometimes happens for overweight people. Therefore, 1 mile for you will equal about 1,000 steps.
5. If your step counter shows less than 500 or more than 3,000 steps, reposition it:
 - Clip it to your underwear, not the waistband of your pants; OR
 - Clip it to the waistband of your pants in the middle of your back.

How do I get started?

1. To avoid injury, you need to work up slowly. If you have not been physically active for a long time, discuss your walking plans with your health care provider before you start.
2. You will need comfortable and properly fitting shoes. Most regular walkers need to replace their shoes every 6 months.
3. Without changing your normal routine, wear your step counter for 2 weeks. At the end of each day, record your steps. At the end of the 2 weeks, look at how many steps you have taken each day.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Diabetes Care Center:
206-598-4882

4. If you are ready to increase your steps, use the highest number of steps you have walked in 1 day as your goal. Or if you prefer, pick any number you are comfortable using as a starting point! Aim for your goal each day for the next 2 weeks. Before going to bed each night, remember to record your steps.
5. At the end of this 2-week period, review all the steps you have taken each day and decide if you want to add another 500 steps to your daily goal.
6. Continue this way, working up as slowly as you wish, until you reach the goal of 10,000 steps a day.
7. Check with your health care provider if you are having any pain or discomfort.
8. The goal of this activity is to help you become more active for the rest of your life. Take it slow. Take it easy.

*Information in "How do I get started" adapted from
www.shapeupamerica.org October 10, 2008.*

Activity Levels

- Less than 5,000 steps per day = sedentary
- 5,000 to 7,499 steps per day = low active
- 7,500 to 9,999 steps per day = somewhat active
- More than 10,000 steps per day = active
- More than 12,000 steps per day = highly active

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER
UW Medicine

Diabetes Care Center

Box 354691
4225 Roosevelt Way NE, Suite #101
Seattle, WA 98105
206-598-4882