

DHRM PEDOMETER WALKING CHALLENGE

Introduction:

Over the years, the Surgeon General has warned Americans about such things as the hazards of cigarette smoking or a high cholesterol level in your blood. In 1996, the Surgeon General issued an important report on physical activity and warned us that regardless of our age, we are just not active enough. Our walking challenge goal is to increase your physical activity, no matter what your current level is.

Typically, American adults average 3000 to 5000 steps a day. Increasing your daily steps can give you more energy, less stress, better weight management, and decrease your chance of developing many diseases. A goal of 10,000 steps per day has become common, but according to a Harvard Study, numbers as low as 6000 steps a day were shown to be correlated with a lower death rate in men.

Your Step Goal:

Instead of using a blanket 10,000 steps per day, your personal goal will be based on your individual baseline plus an incremental increase of steps. Your goal at the end of the 10 week challenge should be to add the equivalent of a half hour of walking (2000-3000 more steps) to your day. (For example, if you wear your pedometer in your ordinary activities and log 4000 steps per day, your goal at the end of the challenge should be a total of 6000-7000 steps a day).

If you feel you are unable to attain this goal due to health or physical limitation reasons, you may select a smaller number of steps as your goal. The purpose of this challenge is not necessarily the number of steps increased, but it is about building your fitness level. Counting your steps can show immediate improvement to your physical activity.

Getting started:

- To avoid injury, you need to work up slowly. If you have any concerns about your joints (ankles, knees or hips) discuss your exercise plans with your physician.
- When possible, wear athletic shoes that offer plenty of cushion and arch support.
- Wear the pedometer each day for the next week without changing anything in your normal routine. Every day before you go to bed, log your steps, and at the end of the week, you will be able to see how many steps you are taking each day in the course of living your life. Perhaps on some days it is as few as 700 steps, but on other days, it may be as high as 2500 steps.

Next steps (pun intended):

- Take the highest number of steps you walked on any given day during the first week of the challenge and use it as your daily step goal for the next two weeks (to avoid injury, do not select a higher number). For example, let's assume your first step goal is 2500 steps. That means that for the next two weeks, you are going to try to walk 2500 steps each day. Even if you didn't reach your step goal, still be sure to log your steps for the day before bed.
- After two weeks of walking with this step goal, review all the steps you took each day and decide if you are ready to add another 500 (or appropriate number for your fitness

level) steps to your goal. Therefore, using the previous example, your new step goal would now be 3000 steps a day for the next two-week period.

Continuing forward:

- Continue in that manner, working up as slowly as you wish, until you finally reach the goal of an additional 2000+ steps a day.
- Check with your physician if you experience any pain or discomfort that concerns you. Consider pain a warning signal that something may be wrong. The goal is to keep you active for the rest of your life, not to pull a muscle and put you out of commission. Take it slow. Take it easy.

How you participate is up to you:

- If you already take 10,000 or more steps a day, you may simply log those steps without increasing the amount each two-week period, or you can challenge yourself to more and set a new goal.
- If, for health or physical limitation reasons, you cannot add 2000-3000 steps a day, you may select a smaller number of steps as your goal. Just be sure to set your goals and record your steps.
- Remember you can personalize this activity for yourself!

Challenge summary:

- Log your steps in the tracking document.
- Set your personal goal.
- Work towards your goal at a pace that is comfortable and not harmful to you.
- Report at the Winter Meeting if you have attained or are on target to reach your goal (reporting will be clarified prior to the meeting).

Information in this document was obtained from:
<http://www.shapeup.org/resources/10ksteps.html>