Challenge: Walk 10,000 steps a day.

To complete this Wellness Challenge:

1. Using a wearable device (pedometer, phone app, Fitbit, etc.) track your steps and average 10,000 steps a day.
2. Mark your daily steps on your Living Healthy Calendar.
3. At the end of the Challenge, report your success online and keep a record for yourself.

Note: If you can’t participate in this Challenge for some reason, please let us know and we’ll be happy to come up with an alternative that suits you.

The benefits of walking

Setting yourself a goal of walking 10,000 steps a day can be a fun way of increasing the amount of physical activity you do. Walking is one of the best and easiest forms of exercise. Walking can build stamina, burn excess calories, and give you a healthier heart. It can be done almost anywhere, at any time, and in any weather.

Fitting 10,000 steps into your busy day

Increasing your walking is easier than you might think. Try these tips to getting a few more steps in your daily routine:

- Get off the bus a stop or two early and walk to your destination.
• Walk to the station instead of driving there.
• Take the stairs instead of the elevator, or walk up escalators.
• Park farther away from the store entrance when shopping.
• Walk the kids to school.
• Take walks after dinner as a family.
• Walk the dog.

Making walking a little bit more fun
• Find a walking buddy so you have someone to chat with as you walk.
• Listen to music, podcasts, or audiobooks as you walk.
• Plan new walking routes or paths.
• Try hiking or join a hiking/walking group.

Tracking your steps

There are many different types of wearable devices. All will track your steps. The most basic is a pedometer. Most smart phones have pedometer apps available and there are electronic wearable devices such as Fitbit, Jawbone, Garmin, etc.

To find out how many steps you take each day, use a wearable device to track the steps you take around the house, at the office, or running errands. You might find that you walk almost 10,000 steps already, or that you walk less than you think. Whatever your results, knowing how far you can walk in a day will motivate you.

If you are not very active, increase your steps gradually. No one expects 10,000 steps on the first day. Using your wearable device, find out how many steps you take during a normal day. Record your daily steps over a week and use the totally weekly number to work out a daily average. Use this daily average to build your steps gradually, by adding a few more steps every so often, until you’re regularly walking 10,000 steps a day.

Walking for life

Being active is a lifelong health habit. It’s great for preventing weight gain, lifting your mood, and reducing your risk of many lifestyle disease, such as heart disease. It takes a while for a regular activity to become a healthy habit, so just keep going and it will become second nature. You’ll soon find yourself doing many more than 10,000 steps on some days.