

Walking for Your Health

Brisk walking is great exercise, and like other endurance exercises, it can increase your heart rate and breathing. Endurance exercises keep you healthy, improve your fitness, and help you do the tasks you need to do every day.

For some, walking for the recommended 30 minutes a day might be difficult. If so, try walking for 10 minutes at a time and build up to three times a day. As your endurance improves, walk longer until you can advance to a single 30-minute walk.

As your walk becomes easier, add new challenges, such as climbing a hill, extending the time you walk, increasing your walking pace, or adding an additional day of walking.

Step counters can help you keep track of your walking, set goals, and measure your progress.

Most inactive people get fewer than 5,000 steps a day, and some very inactive people get only 2,000 steps a day. Try wearing a step counter for a few days to see how you're doing. If you get:

- Fewer than 5,000 steps a day, gradually add 3,000 to 4,000 more steps a day.
- About 8,000 steps a day, you're probably meeting the recommended activity target.
- 10,000 or more steps a day, you can be confident that you're getting an adequate amount of endurance activity.
- 10,000 steps a day comfortably, try for 15,000 steps a day, which would put you in the high activity group.



Quick Tip

Be sure to wear sturdy shoes that give you proper footing. For more information, see the *Go4Life* tip sheet *Fitness Clothes and Shoes*.
www.nia.nih.gov/go4life

VISIT

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- Read more tips for adding physical activity to your day.
- Print useful tools.
- Share your exercise story.



National Institute on Aging

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