

Add steps to your day

Exercise doesn't have to be a rigid, time-consuming activity. In fact, it shouldn't be thought of in terms of one activity. That is why we like the 10,000-a-day concept so much – walking your dog, walking with your child to the park, walking to and from the parking lot, taking the stairs instead of the elevator can all be parts of a daily exercise routine that together add up to 10,000 steps.

The challenge is to think creatively about ways you might add “steps” to your day. Here are just a few ideas:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Run simple errands on foot.
- Listen to music while you walk.
- Walk in different places: by your house, a park, a new neighborhood.
- Get a head start each day by walking first thing in the morning.
- Park several blocks away from your destination or park to the rear of the parking lot.
- Get off the elevator below your destination and walk a couple of flights of stairs
- Park at the opposite end of the mall from where you need to shop.
- Use the restroom, copy machine, water fountain, break room, etc. that is further from your work area.
- Hide the TV remote and walk to the TV to change channels.
- During TV commercials, get up and walk around the house.
- Return the shopping cart all the way into the store after grocery shopping.

Consider adding other walking routines to your day by organizing a lunchtime walking group at work, or a before or after-work group with friends and neighbors. Instead of watching television after dinner, get the whole family outside for a game of tag, frisbee or a walk around the block. Try not to get stuck in the “all or nothing” rut – even if you don't have time for a long walk, you might be able to squeeze in a short one, or at least take the stairs.