



# Healthy Lifestyles: Daily Steps

We've all heard that we should be doing 10,000 steps a day to be healthy. But why does it help, what does 10,000 look like in reality and how do we fit them into the day!



Walking is one of the best and most underrated ways of improving health. A brisk walk (fast enough that you can still talk but not sing) can build stamina, burn excess calories and improve the health of your heart. It is free, requires no equipment other than a pair of trainers and is accessible for all.

1000 steps is roughly 10 minutes of walking, this can be more or less depending on how fast you walk. If you want to know how many steps you do in a day there are many phone pedometer Apps you can download to count them for you.

Doing more steps in a day increases your daily NEAT (Non Exercise Activity Thermogenesis) calorie expenditure. These are the calories you burn outside of your basal metabolic rate (the calories you burn just by living i.e. digestion, circulation, breathing etc.) and any planned exercise such as strength training or running. By increasing your activity you can burn more calories which helps you maintain your weight and increase your cardiac fitness (heart health). As your fitness and stamina improves you will feel healthier and stronger and may want to try other forms of exercise such as cycling or an exercise class.



## 5 easy ways to increase your steps

- 🚶 Park further away from the shops
- 🚶 Get off the bus a stop earlier
- 🚶 Take the stairs instead of the lift
- 🚶 Take a nature walk at the weekend
- 🚶 Walk to school and back

Why not ask if your school is taking part in the 5 day walking challenge this year. You can walk to and from school every day for a week and help improve your health, reduce traffic congestion and pollution.

## Activities to increase steps

### Have a dance party

Put some music on and have a dance at home, dancing is great for getting you moving and for improving your mood. Have a dance while you're waiting for dinner to cook or during the TV ad breaks. Every minute counts and even a few minutes at a time soon adds up to better health!



### Take the dog for a walk

Animals can also carry excess weight! Too little exercise and too many treats can lead them to gain more weight than is healthy for them, affecting their hearts and joints. If you have a dog take them out for a walk this weekend, it will be great for both of you.

### Try a Walking Workout!

Steps can be hard to manage if you're not able to leave the house, especially on days when the weather is bad. If it's raining and windy and going outside feels a bit too much of a challenge try a walking workout.

These are easy and fun and available for free online, try typing walking workouts into YouTube and find a new way to get your steps in!



### Go for a walk on your lunchbreak

Grown ups, this one's for you! Take a break from work at lunchtime, get outside and enjoy some fresh air. Studies show that taking a walk during your lunchbreak can boost concentration, productivity and happiness. So grab your head phones and get walking. Songs with 100 beats per minute, are best to keep up a brisk pace, try Beyoncé's Crazy in Love or Lady Gaga's Just Dance to get you started.

### Try a walk/run

For those of you who are a bit more athletic try upping your stepping game and try a walk/run! These became a popular choice for people during covid lockdowns who wanted to start running to improve their health and mental wellbeing. A walk/run involves timed periods of walking and running, starting with more walking and building up the running periods until you are able to run 5k without stopping (just over 3 miles). Try to NHS Couch to 5K app to get started.



#### Resources:

Walk to School Week - <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school>

Non-exercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT) -

[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12468415/#:~:text=Non%2Dexercise%20activity%20thermogenesis%20\(NEAT\)%20is%20the%20energy%20expended,undertaking%20agricultural%20tasks%20and%20fidgeting.](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12468415/#:~:text=Non%2Dexercise%20activity%20thermogenesis%20(NEAT)%20is%20the%20energy%20expended,undertaking%20agricultural%20tasks%20and%20fidgeting.)

Why we should all be walking during our lunch breaks, according to psychologists - <https://www.stylist.co.uk/life/why-we-should-all-be-walking-during-our-lunch-breaks-according-to-psychologists/348240>

Couch to 5K - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week/>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/>