

Easy Steps to shape up & slim down. (pedometers and other tips for walking program)

Patricia deSa.

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 2001 Rodale Press, Inc.

If you're one of those people who believe that only vigorous exercise--such as jogging 2 miles--counts toward fitness, you'd better think again, says Ross Andersen, PhD, associate professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore. The pedometer research that Dr. Andersen and others have done proves that just increasing your everyday activities--walking the dog and just getting up more often---can make a big difference.

So we decided to give it a try. We put a group of overweight people on a pedometer program. Based on the number of steps they normally took, we divided them into two groups. Those who were most inactive had a goal of 10,000 steps, while those who were more active had a goal of 18,000 steps. After just 8 weeks, they saw improvements in weight, body fat, cholesterol and fitness.

The Secret of the Pedometer: It's inexpensive, low-tech, and doesn't require any expertise," says Catrine Tudor-Locke, PhD, research assistant professor at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. "You just snap it on and look at it every now and then."

You don't have to make time the way you have to plan for visiting the gym or going to aerobics class. Hooking on a pedometer can easily become part of your day, says Rebecca Lindberg, MPH, RD, physical activity advisor for HealthPartners, a large managed-care organization in Minneapolis that has been using pedometers to get people more active since 1999.

The greatest power of the pedometer, though, seems to be its ability to motivate.

"We can give the messages--park your car farther away, take the stairs instead of the elevator--but now all of a sudden, you can look down and see that it does make a difference," Lindberg says. After you take a walk, it's satisfying to see your steps ticking away. It's like a pat on the back.

It also cues you to be more active. When you see or feel the pedometer on your waistband, you're reminded to get moving, especially if you've got a long way to go to hit your goal.

Mag.Coll.: 107K3279



[Copyright and Terms of Use](#)

Article A75658479