Steppin’ It Up

You may have heard about guidelines suggesting that walking 10,000 steps is optimum for health. Walking can improve cardiovascular health and increase weight loss, and walkers in general have lower incidences of cancer, stroke and diabetes. But 10,000 steps may sound daunting. These tips will help you hit your stride.

Set a Reasonable Goal — Approximately 2,000 steps equal about one mile. Walking 10,000 steps is close to five miles. If you haven’t been exercising, you may only average 1,000 to 3,000 steps a day at first. Start by increasing your average daily steps by 500 per week.

Get the Gear — Invest in a good pair of walking shoes, socks that keep your feet dry and blister free, and comfortable clothing.Wicking fabric (fabric that allows perspiration to evaporate readily) can make walking more comfortable. Also, don’t forget a water bottle and sunscreen. Measure It — A pedometer will help you count your steps and miles walked. They come in a variety of styles and have many features.

Increasing Your Steps — There are many ways to work extra steps into your day. Enlist your significant other or friend to walk with you. Walk to the grocery store, window shop, walk the dog, or walk over to a neighbor’s house. If you are shopping at a large complex, park farther away from the store and use the stairs rather than the elevator. You could plan a walking group with friends once a week. Or, in the evening, rather than sitting and watching television, walk outside and see how your garden is doing, or go to an open air market or street fair.When all else fails, you can always get up and change the channel, right?

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