

Walking your way to improved fitness

– one step at a time

Do you want to take steps to becoming more active? Can you give 10%? That's right, you don't have to give it 100%, just 10% ...more.

By doing a bit more every day, or every other day, you will soon find yourself getting fitter and feeling healthier.

**IF WE ARE FACING
IN THE RIGHT
DIRECTION
ALL WE HAVE TO DO
IS KEEP ON
WALKING**

Walking is an easy, enjoyable way to be active. All you need to get started are good walking shoes, comfortable clothing and self-motivation. You can do it anywhere – home or around work, on your own with your favourite music, or with friends and family.

It is suggested we should all aim for an average of 10,000 steps a day. Typically, someone who has an office job, works long hours, or tends to be a fan of the couch & TV is likely to average about 3,500 steps a day. With a bit of willpower, over 12 weeks you can work up to 10,000 steps a day on average (let's be honest, some days you just cannot achieve it, but other days, such as weekends, it will be easier to find time to do a little more).

Most smart phones have a fitness tracker or you may want to invest in a pedometer or fitness tracker such as a Fitbit. There are also websites such as MapMyRun that you can chart where you went and it will calculate the distance.

If it's all a bit daunting, take baby steps – and start by counting power poles. How many power poles do you pass when you walk for 5 minutes? Turn around and count them again as you walk home.

Week one, start out slow. If you take on too much too quickly you not only risk injury but you certainly risk giving up! Try to walk 10-15 minutes three times during the week. That will give you a good average. Your pace should be brisk – you can hear yourself breathing but you aren't so puffed you cannot talk and you are gasping for air. Swing your arms as you walk.

Week two, try to add 10 per cent to your average daily steps, or if you have passed 10 power poles, walk to the 11th before turning around. As your fitness improves, you are likely to travel more distance in shorter times, so to build up your steps, try to keep walking for at least the same amount of time if not longer.

If you feel your motivation waning, invite a friend or relative to join you. You can catch up, time feels like it has gone faster, and having that commitment to take part will keep you on track.



As your fitness improves, include 10-20 minutes of aerobic exercise every other day by walking up a steep hill at the park, increasing the flights of stairs you climb, doing star jumps or jogging on the spot.

Remember ... If it's been a while since you've done more than 15-20 minutes of exercise a day, check with your GP first.

I'M GOING TO MAKE
YOU SO PROUD
~ *note to self*



12 Week Walking Plan

	STARTING OUT AVERAGE STEPS PER DAY	
Week 1	3,500	5,000
Week 2	3,850	5,500
Week 3	4,240	6,050
Week 4	4,700	6,700
Week 5	5,200	7,300
Week 6	5,720	8,000
Week 7	6,300	8,800
Week 8	7,000	9,680
Week 9	7,700	10,650
Week 10	8,500	11,700
Week 11	9,350	12,870
Week 12	10,250	14,000


Ways to get a few extra steps in:

- Avoid the lift or escalator, use the stairs instead
- Get up and change the channel on the TV
- When you leave the house or come home, walk to letterbox or do a lap of the property
- Park at the very end of the supermarket or mall, rather than look for a closer parking space
- Try to walk 250 steps every hour
- Walk up and down the hallway while the kettle is boiling or the microwave is on
- Walk to the dairy or local shops rather than jumping in the car
- Alter your route so you don't get bored

PUSH HARDER

THAN YESTERDAY
IF YOU WANT A
DIFFERENT
TOMORROW

TIPS



Keep checking your posture – you should be trying to walk taller, shoulders relaxed and low, your stomach held in so your abdominal muscles are working too.

Drink a large glass of water about 30 minutes before you set out (so you are hydrated but also have time for a bathroom stop before you go) and when you get back. On longer walks, take a water bottle with you.

If you're walking on paths around the suburbs, always **walk facing the oncoming traffic**, and **wear bright colours** so drivers can easily see you. (And if walking at night, wear a reflective jacket – they have them at \$2 shops.)

If you plan to walk in the morning, put your **alarm clock in another room**, once you're up and out of bed it's easier to find motivation.

Diabetes New Zealand is a leading national organisation and registered charity. Our aim is to support all people affected by diabetes to live well through: Providing information and support to help people take charge of their health • Acting as an advocate and representing all people with, or at risk of developing, diabetes • Raising awareness of diabetes, especially around lifestyle factors that can help prevent or delay type 2 and help manage and control type 1 and type 2.