

Walking

Body & health

The most accessible exercise there is, and the numbers behind it.

Sustained moderate activity requiring no equipment, no skill and no facility. It has among the strongest evidence bases of any health intervention.

USEFUL
4,000+

STRONG
7–8,000

BRISK
~100 steps/min

- Benefits appear well below 10,000 steps a day.
- Large studies show substantial gains between 4,000 and 8,000.
- Brisk pace adds benefit beyond step count alone.
- Ten-minute blocks count as much as one long walk.
- It improves sleep, mood, blood pressure and blood glucose.
- Outdoors adds daylight exposure, which helps the body clock.

LOOK FOR IT

Three ten-minute walks a day is about 3,000 extra steps, and fits inside most working days.

10,000 steps came from a 1960s Japanese pedometer marketing campaign, not from research.