



# Fitness Facts

## 10,000 Steps A Day: Getting Fit, Step By Step

(NAPSA)—When did life become a numbers game? The day kicks off with a radio recap of travel times that sounds like a fourth-grade math problem. Meal planning is expressed through calories, points or fat grams. Rarely a day passes that does not require at least one access code, pin or password. And while numbers have always played a large role in fitness—30 minutes of activity per day, three sets of 15 reps, etc.—a new number has emerged that can simplify efforts to stay in shape. When in doubt, aim for 10,000. Ten thousand steps, that is.

Experts in fitness and weight management say that walking 10,000 steps per day can provide enough physical activity to achieve average weight-loss goals and increase fitness. With a basic pedometer that tracks the number of steps taken, a normal day—one that involves a few errands, a walk with the dog and perhaps a sprint for the bus—takes on the importance of a regular workout. While 10,000 steps sounds like a huge number, consider that the average city block is approximately 200 steps long. Ten thousand steps equals approximately five miles.

The best way to get started is to figure out how many steps you normally take per day. This number can be anywhere from 700 to 3,000 on average and it's surpris-



**Walking 10,000 steps a day may be easier than you think.**

ing how much untallied walking a day contains. A few laps around the office can be all in a day's work, but if the office covers the entire floor of a building, the steps add up. Any mom who pushes a stroller around knows that qualifies as exercise, but she may forget that chasing the toddler around the playground—or the grocery store—counts, too.

Dixie Thompson, Ph.D., director of the Center for Physical Activity and Health at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, recommends in *Shape* magazine that you wear a pedometer for a week (it can cost less than \$30) while going about your normal routine to determine the number of steps you take on average every day.

With an idea of your normal day's activity, it will be easier for

you to add more steps gradually. Park farther away from a destination or store and walk the rest of the way; get off the bus or out of the taxi a few blocks early; make it a rule to walk to any place that's less than a mile away (if it's safe, of course). Steps accrued through jogging and running count, too.

If daily demands make it difficult to add enough steps, consider investing in a home treadmill. A treadmill in front of the TV can make the goal an easy one to reach, all while enjoying the latest episode of "Desperate Housewives." One treadmill, the Life Fitness T7-0, even comes with a 10,000 steps tracking program, so users can focus on the Housewives' shenanigans while the machine calculates the number of steps you need to reach 10,000, based on your estimate for how many steps you've already taken, or will take, that day.

Aiming for 10,000 steps per day can bring unexpected benefits. Adding a short walk at lunchtime will accrue steps and some fresh air, which can lead to a better night's sleep. Leaving the car behind to run errands on foot can make that very expensive tank of gas last longer. Best of all, walking is a terrific stress management tool, and with a clear mind it will be a snap to remember all those other vital numbers you need every day.