

## Using a Pedometer to Step it Up a Notch

A Pedometer is an inexpensive tool to help you track physical activity. Simply put, pedometers are step counters. Just as tracking your food intake makes you more aware of your eating patterns, pedometers increase awareness of how much you walk throughout your day. The goal of wearing a pedometer is to help you increase your daily physical activity.

### Pedometer Placement



The placement of your pedometer can impact the accuracy of your readings. All pedometers should be clipped onto a belt or your pants at the waist level. If wearing a dress, you can try clipping the pedometer to your underwear. The best placement along the waist varies slightly between individuals. Most people find that pedometers accurately record steps when placed in alignment with the crease of their pants. Some individuals will want to move the pedometer a little towards the outside of their hip. The best way to know what placement is best for you is to put the pedometer on, walk 100 steps while counting the steps, and then check your pedometer to see if it is recording accurately.

### How many steps should I get?

Inactive individuals often take less than 3000 steps per day. Maintaining this low level of activity is associated with increased risk of a variety of diseases, including obesity. Your goal steps should be based on your baseline number of steps. Each week you should try to increase your steps by 1000-2000 per day until you get to around 10,000 steps per day. If achieving 10,000 steps

per day seems like an unrealistic goal, start small. Even a little more activity is a "step" in the right direction.

### What about non-walking physical activity?

Some of you may choose physical activity other than walking. You shouldn't use your pedometer when cycling and swimming (I guess you already knew that). As a general rule, 10 minutes of cardiovascular exercise is about the same as 1000 steps. So if you walk 6000 steps per day and swim for 40 minutes, you've achieved your goal of 10,000 steps!

To learn more about L.I.F.E. for Kids, St. Vincent's holistic healthy lifestyle program for children and adolescents, call (317) 338-CARE.

