

Pedometers – Make every Step Count!

A pedometer is a small electronic device with a mechanical sensor that counts how many steps a person takes. A pedometer senses the vibrations of your feet hitting the pavement or the movement of hips and uses these to move the counter forward. A pedometer can help to assess the physical activity levels of children.

Recommendations for Children and Youth:

To help achieve a health benefit:

- Girls aged 6-12 years old should strive to take a **minimum** of 12,000 steps per day.
- Boys aged 6-12 years old should strive to take a **minimum** of 15,000 steps per day.

Children should gradually increase their steps by approximately 2000 steps daily. Encourage your kids to meet daily physical activity recommendations of 16,500 steps.

Setting Up Your Pedometer



Photograph by: Ann Marie Busch

1. Clip pedometer over your belt or waistband (over your hip bone).
2. Push the top of the pedometer away from yourself to open display.
3. Set switch to STEPS.
4. Press to set number of steps to zero (0).
5. Close the pedometer. The pedometer should count between 38 and 42 steps when you walk 40 steps.

If not, readjust the position of the pedometer on your waistband.

Then, if recording too many steps, move the grey switch at the bottom of the display a bit to the left; if recording too few steps, move grey switch a bit to the right.

6. DISTANCE and CALORIE measures have not been shown to be accurate. See full instruction sheet included with the pedometer for more details.

NOTE: Opening the pedometer causes it to stop counting.

Source: Hamilton Walks

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does a Pedometer actually work?

When worn properly, the pedometer records each step you take by measuring each time your hip moves up and down. It will also measure other movements such as bending to tie your shoes. Essentially, a pedometer is a motion-sensitive electrical circuit that switches on and off, activating a digital counter.

2. If a pedometer rattles; does this mean it's broken?

The rattling sound you hear is the suspended lever arm which moves as you do and counts your steps. You might have noticed that when you shake the pedometer, the steps increase but don't cheat! The only one who will lose is you and your health.

3. Where is the best place to wear a pedometer?

To get the most accurate reading, place the unit on your waistband between your navel and your hip and ensure that it is vertical. Also, make sure that it is secure, because if it shifts at all during your walk, it won't give an accurate reading.

4. Is it safe to wear?

There is no published research on the safety of a pedometer. However, pedometers are being used daily around the world. The only device in a pedometer is a battery. The battery is similar to a watch battery and it is equivalent to wearing a watch. If it is safe for you to wear a watch then it is considered safe to wear a pedometer.

5. Are there times that it shouldn't be worn?

The pedometer can be worn throughout the day. Please do not get the pedometer wet; do not wear it when swimming, showering, or playing in sprinklers and the like. Also, if a child plays contact sports, the instructor or coach may ask that it is removed.

6. I don't think my child's pedometer is working properly. What should I do?

In most cases, problems with pedometers accurately recording steps can be remedied by adjusting how the pedometer is positioned on the body. It's important that the pedometer remain upright because of how the internal mechanism works. If the child's tummy is pushing the pedometer out of its upright position, it may be getting inaccurate results. Wearing the pedometer on a waistband directly under the armpit may solve this problem.

7. The pedometer keeps falling off, what do we do?

Some clothing tends to be more 'slippery' than others. A different outfit will probably be more successful. If your child's tummy is causing the pedometer to be horizontal rather than vertical, this may cause it to pop off as well and it will not read properly in this position. Try moving it more to the side.