

Fall Into Good Health

November 2004

It's fall—a great time to get outside and take a walk. The heat of summer is all but forgotten so there's no excuse! This is the time to get moving. Get out and take a walk and enjoy the boundless beauty this season has to offer.

10,000 Steps

You may have heard of the 10,000 Steps Program. It's part of "Shape Up America!", a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Americans achieve healthy weight for life. Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop founded Shape Up America in 1994 because of his concern about the increasing prevalence of obesity in the United States. While 10,000 is not a magic number; it is enough, according to research, to help people control blood sugar levels, improve blood pressure, enhance cardiovascular health and prevent weight gain.

Keeping Track

Grab a pedometer and get walking! Experts estimate that most of us probably take around 5,000 to 6,000 steps going through our normal activities of living and work. A typical office worker takes on average only about 3,000 to 5,000 steps daily. In order to get those extra steps go out and take a brisk walk for 30 minutes. That should bring you up to goal. Walking is a great low-impact activity that almost everyone can do. All you need to start things off is a good pair of shoes and the right socks.

To add extra steps to your daily routine try:

- Parking in the farthest space from the classroom, office, mall.
- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Hiding the remote and changing channels the old-fashioned way.

Just for the Health of It

If walking isn't your thing, find an activity that works for you. Jog, run, cycle, swim, kayak, whatever, just make sure it's something you enjoy. Remember, research shows that being active can reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, some cancers and osteoporosis. So, what are you waiting for? Get moving!

Always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program.