Pedometer apps

There are many pedometer apps which count steps, in addition to other functions. Many pedometer apps can be downloaded to smart phones free of charge.

To test the reliability of your pedometer or app, count the number of steps you take and record against your pedometer or app and adjust accordingly.

Reduce the amount of time you spend sitting

- Cut down on the amount of time you spend watching television, movies or using your computer or phone
- Meet your friends for a cycle, jog or swim rather than always watching TV
- Walk while talking on your phone
- Take your dog for a walk
- Get up and move during the TV ad breaks
- Meet friends instead of talking to them ‘online’
- Do the Irish Heart Foundation Step or Walk Challenge

Find a balance between the amount of time you spend sitting doing homework and the amount of time spent sitting at your computer and using your phone. Aim to limit your time on electronic equipment to less than two hours per day.

Reduce your sitting time

While you have to spend a certain amount of time sitting in school and doing homework, spending many hours sitting can affect your health and can lead to overweight and obesity.

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**RECORD SHEET**

**Step Challenge - record your steps**

**Walk Challenge - record your minutes**

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<th>Week</th>
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**Start date:**

**Finish date:**

If you are very inactive, have a health problem, or are worried about any aspect of your health, you should consult your doctor before starting this activity challenge.

Irish Heart Foundation
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Supported by
Be more active for your heart

Young people (up to 18 years) need to be physically active at a moderate to vigorous intensity for at least 60 minutes every day. Being more active is one of the best ways to keep your heart healthy and prevent health problems into the future. It can also help you achieve better results in school and in exams. It can reduce stress because your body produces ‘happy hormones’ called endorphins when you are physically active. Take up the Irish Heart Foundation Step or Walk Challenge to help you build more activity into your school, home and social life.

Be more active for your heart

Moderate intensity activity requires effort, it increases your heart rate and breathing, but you are still able to talk. For an added challenge, build in vigorous intensity physical activity into your day. Vigorous intensity makes you ‘huff and puff’ and conversation is difficult.

Moderate Intensity Activity
Brisk walking, swimming, cycling, dancing, skipping, skating

Vigorous Intensity Activity
Fast cycling, jogging, competitive sport, e.g. tennis, hockey, football

Physical activity is any activity that gets your body moving and can include organised activities such as walking or cycling and from school, swimming, football, hockey and your Physical Education (PE) class. It includes less structured activities such as playing ball with family members, climbing stairs, climbing trees, playing tag, taking the stairs while out shopping, playing frisbee and walking while on your phone etc.

On at least 3 days each week include activities that strengthen muscles and bones and that give you flexibility.

**Bone strengthening:** running, hopping, skipping, jumping and sports such as gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, tennis

**Muscle strengthening:** push-ups and pull-ups, climbing walls, resistance exercises with exercise bands, weight machines, hand-held weights

**Flexibility:** Yoga, tai chi, pilates

You can do the Irish Heart Foundation Step or Walk Challenge on your own, with a group of friends or with your school for four weeks.

How does it work?

**Walk challenge**
Your goal is to be active for at least 60 minutes every day. For most young people, this can be achieved by taking part in the Walk Challenge and walking for at least 30 minutes at a brisk pace five days a week or about 150 minutes over a week, in addition to your regular leisure activity, sport and PE. The Walk Challenge, which is for 4 consecutive weeks, can be part of your travel to and from school, meeting friends, going to the shop, going to the bus stop, climbing stairs, walking the dog etc. It’s up to you how you want to accumulate the 150 minutes. Consider taking 10 minutes in the morning, 15 minutes walking home from school and the rest later in the day. Spend less time sitting and you’ll be surprised how many minutes you clock up.

Record the dates and minutes of your walks in the record sheet on the reverse.

**Step Challenge**
Using a pedometer or a pedometer app on your phone, aim to build up to the 10,000 steps per day for good health. Walking 10,000 steps per day is about 8km and includes your regular routine activities, such as walking to and from school, walking to meet your friends, walking the dog, taking the stairs, walking while on the phone. Many people only take between 3,000 and 5,000 steps a day. How many do you think you take?

Record the number of steps you take daily and progress gradually towards achieving 10,000 steps by adding 300-500 steps each day. If you are inactive at the moment (less than 3,000 steps per day), it will take you two to three weeks to reach the 10,000 target. And if you are fairly active (more than 7,000 steps per day), you will achieve your target in one week.

Converting your steps
Other activities, such as playing sport, jogging, cycling, dancing, or swimming can be included while doing the Step Challenge. Use the formula below to convert to steps.

10 minutes of moderate intensity activity = 1,000 steps
10 minutes of vigorous intensity activity = 2,000 steps

Using a pedometer
A pedometer is a device which counts steps and is also called a step-o-meter or step counter. The pedometer has a built-in pendulum which moves as you walk and counts these as steps. It is best to wear your pedometer on the top of your waistband or on a belt around your hip, in line with your knee.

How can you spread your 60 minutes of activity throughout the day or do it all at once?

| 30 minutes cycling to school | 20 minutes PE class and 20 minutes playing tag with family |
| 30 minutes walking to school and 30 minutes playing sport |
| 30 minutes dance class, 15 minutes taking dog for walk, 15 minutes walking to school bus stop |

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