



BeWell

A Step-by-Step Guide to 10,000 Steps a Day



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Introduction

Congratulations on taking steps to improve your health and well-being. This program is about making small changes to your daily routine, which can have an effect on your health and quality of life. Most people know that incorporating physical activity into their lives can reduce their risk of disease and result in better health, but for many reasons achieving increased activity is often much more difficult than it seems. This program is designed to help you start from your current level of fitness and incorporate physical activity into your life one step at a time. This booklet will help you in various ways: setting stepping goals, identifying barriers and developing strategies for overcoming them, identifying a support network, and dealing with setbacks.



Get Ready...

Identify the Benefits

The first step to successfully meeting your step goals is to be clear about your reasons for entering this program. There are many health benefits of physical activity that we could present (such as reducing your risk for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and colon cancer; improving your cholesterol levels and blood pressure; controlling your weight; building healthy bones, muscles, and joints; etc.). However, these may not be the most important benefits to you. Take a few minutes to write out the benefits you are most looking forward to from participating in this program.

How do you think increasing the number of steps you take a day will improve your health and well-being?

What other aspects of your life may be improved?

Anticipating Obstacles and Problem Solving

Obstacles will arise as you attempt to meet your step goals. Your chances of success are much greater if you anticipate these challenges and create strategies to deal with them ahead of time. A good way to identify possible obstacles is to remember past ones. Have you ever started an exercise program before? Were you successful in meeting your goals? Why or why not? What obstacles hindered your efforts in the past?

In the space below, list situations or events that you predict will pose a problem for you meeting your step goals. Brainstorm with friends and family to come up with potential obstacles and strategies for dealing with them.

Obstacle: _____

Strategy: _____

Obstacle: _____

Strategy: _____



Obstacle: _____

Strategy: _____

Obstacle: _____

Strategy: _____

Obstacle: _____

Strategy: _____

As you begin to track your steps, you will continue to identify obstacles and come up with strategies to overcome them.

Strive to use each obstacle as a stepping-stone to your success.

Recruit a Support Network

In behavioral research, social support is often associated with successful health behavior change, such as increasing physical activity. Social support for your walking program can be A) instrumental (e.g. someone preparing dinner so you can go for a walk instead); B) informational (e.g. someone telling you about good trails in the area); or C) emotional (e.g. someone calling to see how you're doing and helping you overcome barriers). Sources of support include family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and exercise program leaders and participants.

Finding a Teammate: One helpful form of support for this program is to find someone who is also trying to increase their level of physical activity. You can think of this person as your "teammate." If you do find a teammate for this program, confirm that they are up to the task, then write their name and contact information below.

Name: _____

Contact: _____



Finding a Cheerleader: Instead of, or in addition to, selecting a teammate, you may also want to select a "cheerleader" - someone who will lend you support from the sidelines. A spouse, friend, family member, or coworker could be your cheerleader. The only requirement is that this person has your best interests at heart. If you do decide to have a cheerleader, confirm that they are up to the task. Write their name and contact information below.

Name: _____

Contact: _____

Coach Your Support Network

If you decide to have the help of a teammate and/or cheerleader(s), it is important that you think about how you would like your supporters to help you, and that you communicate your desires to them. For example, you may want to be occasionally reminded of your goals and the benefits of achieving those goals. You also may not want to be chided harshly if you experience a lapse.

If you are requesting help from others, use the space below to write down the ways in which you would like to receive support. Also, write anything you would like them to refrain from doing in their efforts to support you (e.g., "Do not give me a hard time if I don't meet my weekly goal.").

Be sure to communicate your needs and desires to your supporters.

Teammate: _____

Cheerleader(s): _____



Record Your Current Behavior

Another important step in successfully meeting your goal is to have a good understanding of where you are starting from. Many of us set lofty goals that sound exciting to achieve, then get discouraged when we do not meet them.

For the first week of this program, track your steps, but try not to change your current routine. Log the number of steps you take each day and treat this as your baseline measurement. This first week will help determine what you can realistically achieve by the end of this program. For example, if your average is 3,000 steps a day, your goal may be 6,500 steps a day at the end of ten weeks. If your baseline is 5,000 steps a day, 8,500 may be an achievable goal.

Baseline Progress Journal:

Day	Steps	Progress Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

By this point in the program, you have tracked your baseline daily steps in the Baseline Progress Journal on the previous page for at least three days of your first week.



*"A journey of a thousand miles must
Begin with a single step."*

-Lao Tzu

Get Set...

Commit to Your Long-term Goal

You have now tracked your steps for one week without changing your routine. Use your baseline daily number of steps to determine your long-term goal. A general rule of thumb is to set a goal that is realistic and based on your current number of steps. This booklet only has space to track your steps for ten weeks, but you can continue to work toward your goal long after this.

My long-term goal is _____ steps a day.



Next, read the statement below aloud and then sign and date. If you have a teammate and/or cheerleader, ask them to sign as a pledge of their support for your success. Of course, this is not a legally binding contract, but one that you should take seriously. Also, it is important for you to know how committed your teammate and cheerleaders are to your success.

“I promise to start taking the necessary steps toward achieving my goal listed above.”

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

Teammate signature: _____ Date: _____

Setting Short-term Goals

When you start your Step Journal, you will be writing weekly short-term step goals. The best short-term goals are...

Realistic: Realistic goals are based on what you are presently doing rather than what you wish you were doing. For example, if you currently take 3,000 steps a day, a realistic goal for now would be to average 3,300 steps a day for the next week. In the future, you will modify your goals when you feel ready.

Behavioral: Behavioral goals are based on what you will do, not what you want to be. For example, "During the week, I will take the stairs instead of the elevator," rather than, "I will become more fit."

Measurable and Specific: Measurable goals allow you to know exactly when you have accomplished your goal, so you can congratulate yourself! For example, "I will walk 30 minutes at lunch on Tuesday," rather than, "I will walk during the week."

Your short-term goals are the "next step" in your path toward achieving your long-term goal and should be based on what you are currently doing. These goals should be a small step outside your current comfort zone



Rewarding Yourself

Rewarding yourself can be helpful when making a change in your lifestyle. You may be less motivated to continue if you feel that you're sacrificing a lot to make this change without getting any benefits. Sometimes it is a good idea to indulge yourself with a reward when you accomplish a short-term goal. Some people find external rewards (e.g., buying new clothes or going to the movies) motivating. For others, a reward may consist of being able to "check off" that they have accomplished what they set out to do. The best rewards are those that reinforce your health goal (e.g., buying new sneakers, downloading more songs), but at the very least, the rewards should not be at odds with your goal. Below is a list of rewards you might find motivating:

- Buy new music
- Buy or pick some fresh flowers for your home
- Go to dinner with a friend
- See a movie
- Take some time to yourself
- Take a destination hike
- Schedule a manicure or pedicure
- Take a mini vacation
- Play a game with the family
- Eat at a favorite restaurant
- Buy tickets to something special

No matter what types of rewards you choose, it is vital that you keep your short-term goals realistic and just a step beyond your comfort zone to sustain an intrinsic source of motivation. And, as you continue with your behavior change, you will soon find yourself experiencing the benefits you listed on the first pages of this booklet, which will be motivating as well. Use the space below to write in rewards that may work for you:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Dealing with a Setback

Most of us occasionally lapse into our old behavior when trying to make a change. Expect this! Plan for this! When this happens, it's very important to forgive yourself. Using the experience as an educational tool is the best way to handle setbacks, so in the future you are less likely to make the same mistakes. When some people have a lapse, they give up completely. You don't need to! Instead, use the lapse as a learning experience. Reflect on what may have led up to the lapse, and on healthy ways to handle those triggers in the future. Review your long- and short-term goals. Get help from your support network. Remember, lapses will happen from time to time, but this is not a reason to think that you have failed.

After a setback, people often have a negative "inner voice" that chides them. It's important to restructure this inner voice into something more constructive. For example, if you miss a day of exercise, you should tell yourself, "That's okay, I will do better tomorrow," rather than, "I'm such a couch potato; I'll never be able to maintain a physical activity program."

A good analogy is what happens when you make a mistake and dent your car. Instead of abandoning the car in a junkyard, you keep driving it. Once you've fixed the car, there isn't a trace of the dent. You are certainly worth fixing as much as your car! Learn from your experiences, get back on track, and stay focused on your goals.



Notes:

"Happiness is neither virtue nor pleasure nor this thing nor that but simply growth. We are happy when we are growing."

-William Butler Yeats

Go...

Start Stepping

Now you are ready to set your weekly goals and start to track your progress. At the beginning of each week, you will use the following Step Journal pages to write your daily step goal for that week. Use the top of the page to write out a specific plan for that week (e.g., Walk around the lake with Linda on Tuesday morning before work. Take the stairs at least four times each day. Park in the farthest parking space from the entrance or walk the dog one extra time each day.) Brainstorm about potential barriers for the week and strategize ways to overcome them.

Sample barrier: It's cold and wet outside!

Sample strategy: I'll wear extra layers and I'll borrow Jeff's silver rain jacket.

Make sure you base your daily step goal for the week on what you are currently doing. Your weekly goal should be a small step outside your current comfort zone. Don't make your weekly goals so lofty that you are unlikely to accomplish them. Incorporating physical activity into your life takes time in order to be permanent.

After you've specified your short-term goal and how you plan to work on it, keep track of your steps in the journal provided.

Remember: Behavior change is a gradual process. You won't be able to accomplish every short-term goal every time you try. Do NOT view less than total success as "failure." Instead, look upon it as a learning experience and redefine your next short-term goal. Also, remember you will have a support network to help you with your behavior change. Ultimately, however, you are responsible for achieving your long-term goals.

Step Journal- Week 2

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____

2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Step Journal – Week 3

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____

2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Step Journal - Week 4

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____

2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Step Journal - Week 5

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____

2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Step Journal- Week 6

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____

2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Step Journal - Week 7

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____

2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Step Journal- Week 8

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____

2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Step Journal - Week 9

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____

2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Step Journal – Week 10

1. Number of steps to take each day this week: _____
2. Plans to increase steps (include when, where, and with whom):

3. Perceived barriers and strategies to overcome them:

Day	Steps	Notes
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Next Steps:

Congratulations! At this point you're ten weeks into your step program. Because behavior change is a very gradual process, you may not have achieved your long-term goal quite yet. It is likely, however, that you have made substantial strides.

You've worked hard; now you need to work to maintain the progress you've made. At times you may become de-motivated. Maybe you haven't received all of the benefits you had hoped for as a result of your behavior. At these times, think back to all of the benefits you have received. Compare how you feel presently with how you felt before making the change. Focus on the benefits you have received rather than those you may not have - this will help keep you motivated. The good news is that maintaining your behavior will get easier the longer you continue to practice it - as it becomes a habit.

Even after you achieve your long-term goal, it is a good idea to continue to keep track of your physical activity to some degree. Obviously, though, lifelong completion of weekly step logs is neither feasible nor necessary.

If you find yourself reverting back to inactivity, don't panic. Don't throw in the towel and give up. Instead, simply take stock of your current level of activity, then set and achieve successive short-term goals until you have (again) achieved your long-term goal. For most people, maintenance is really a cycle of maintenance and lapses. The key is to be honest with yourself and recognize when you have fallen back into your old pattern of behavior. In the future, you will have a better idea of the factors that may lead to a lapse, and thus you will be better able to deal with them.

Once achieving a minimum number of daily steps becomes second nature, consider adopting another movement goal. Because *reducing sedentary behavior* is as important as *increasing physical activity*, consider adding in a goal to spread your steps throughout the day, attempting to get at least 250 steps during most waking hours.

Please join us for a Healthy Living offering. We will do our best to support you in attaining all your health and wellness goals.

Best Wishes,
Your BeWell Team