

Health Tips

Your Good Health Information From eDocAmerica

with

Dr. D



 Printer Friendly

Health Tip: Walking Further with a Pedometer

Where exercise is concerned, many people understand its importance, but lack the motivation to participate regularly. This application of "the mind is willing, but the body is weak" mentality only serves to frustrate without ever achieving important daily exercise goals. Many who exercise regularly have found some motivation tool that works for them. Different motivators work for different

people. Some enjoy the camaraderie and peer pressure of exercising with a friend or exercise group. Others track their progress by keeping a daily journal. Having the goal of reaching a particular weight or preparing oneself for an upcoming race are other ways that some are able to stick to an exercise regimen.

Recently a novel way of increasing one's level of physical activity, with attendant health benefits, was presented in the Journal of the American Medical Association.



The authors of this report, noting that many people use pedometers as an exercise motivator, wondered if there was proof that pedometers were effective in increasing the amount that people actually walked. They summarized the results of 26 studies, involving 2767 healthy adults, that looked at the association of pedometer use with physical activity and health outcomes. It was found that by wearing and monitoring a pedometer, participants were motivated to increase the number of steps that they took each day. Overall, pedometer users increased their physical activity by an astonishing 26.9% over their baseline. Those who set a goal for themselves, such as walking 10,000 steps per day, were the ones who were most likely to increase their daily exercise amount. By wearing a pedometer, they could receive immediate feedback regarding the number of steps that they had taken as the day progressed. But better yet, those that walked further were also noted to receive important health benefits. As a result of the additional exercise, these same individuals were found to have significantly decreased their body mass index and improved their blood pressure readings.

While a pedometer is a relatively inexpensive device, usually retailing anywhere

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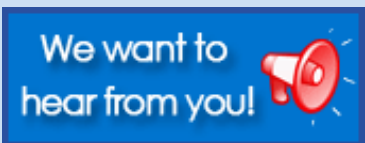
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to become healthier.

from \$10 to \$30, one can also be obtained free of charge by joining the Keep Moving Program, sponsored by the makers of Tylenol. Now there is no excuse for not having one and using it. Walking is something that many people don't consider as a means of reaching their exercise goals. But walking, particularly if done briskly or by climbing stairs, is an excellent way to become physically fit. By serving as a "string around the finger" the pedometer appears to help people not only to take additional steps, but also



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