

100 Ways to Add 2,000 Steps

It's not just what we eat that's important, but how we use the calories we consume. As long as you're active enough to balance the calories you eat with the calories you burn in physical activity, you can enjoy an occasional treat and still avoid weight gain.

By pledging to walk an extra mile (equivalent to 2,000 steps) and reduce 100 calories for one day you'll see how easy it is to achieve the energy balance that can stop weight gain.

Small changes in your daily activity will quickly add up to 2,000 extra steps or more! Find ways to add steps at home, at work, and at play with this list of ideas.

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At Home

Household chores, neighborhood walks, and errands are great opportunities for adding steps. Try these ideas for increasing your walking:

- Circle around the block once when you go outside to get your mail
- Walk around the outside aisles of the grocery store before shopping
- Drive or walk to a nearby high school and go around the track: 4 laps equal approximately 2,000 steps
- Make several trips up and down the stairs to do laundry or other household chores
- Pass by the drive-thru window and walk into the bank or restaurant
- Stroll the halls while waiting for your doctor's appointment
- Listen to music or books on tape while walking
- Invite friends or family members to join you for a walk
- Accompany your children on their walk to school
- Take your dog for a walk
- Start a walking club in your community
- Walk to a nearby store, post office, or dry cleaners to accomplish errands
- Benefit a good cause by joining a charity walk
- Walk to your place of worship for services
- Cut the grass
- Pace around your house while talking on the phone
- Buy a walking video so you can get in your steps on rainy days
- Experience the splendor of a sunrise on an early morning walk
- Spur your imagination by observing your neighbor's landscaping and gardens while you walk — incorporate ideas from your favorites in your own yard
- Walk to a friend's house for a visit
- Try "retro walking"; walking backwards distributes your weight more evenly (be sure you're in a safe area and are aware of your surroundings)
- Keep a walking journal, in addition to tracking steps, jot down how you feel after returning from a walk — enhanced energy is a great motivator
- Focus on walking distance over speed, it's better to get in more steps at a comfortable pace than to burn out quickly
- Walk on a treadmill on rainy days or when it's too dark to walk outside
- March in place while watching your favorite TV show
- Reverse your walking routine — start in the direction where you usually end
- Boost the results of your walk by using trekking poles

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- Catch up on the day's events with your spouse and children on an after-dinner walk
- Sleep more soundly at night by taking a walk a few hours before you go to bed

At Work

Adding steps to your workday can help you reduce stress and stay alert. Try these ideas:

- Go for a walk before starting your morning commute, you'll energize yourself for the day
- Exit the bus 1 or 2 stops early and walk the remainder of the way
- Walk to work if you live close enough
- Refill your coffee cup at the machine farthest from your workstation
- Visit the restroom on the far side of the building
- Hold a meeting while you go for a walk
- Avoid elevators and escalators: take the stairs instead
- Park in the far reaches of the parking lot
- Escape the stress of a difficult day by excusing yourself for a few minutes of walking
- Walk to a nearby store to buy a treat for your co-workers
- Designate 10 minutes of your lunch break for a quick walk
- Start an office walking club
- Ask co-workers to join you on a before or after work walk
- Walk to co-workers' desks to speak to them instead of sending an email
- Create a step competition with fellow employees — see who can get the most steps in a day
- Encourage your co-workers to join you on walks during breaks
- Climb the stairs or stroll the sidewalks for a few minutes at the end of your shift
- Shake off the effects of your evening commute by walking before dinner

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At Play

Whether your leisure time is specifically for physical activity or not, there are plenty of ways to add more steps. Try these ideas:

- Walk around the campus of a nearby university or college
- Window shop while you pace through a shopping mall
- Take the long route when browsing at a shopping center — don't visit the stores sequentially
- Join a water walking class, the natural resistance of the water strengthens muscles
- Tour a museum, zoo, or nature preserve
- Circle around a swap meet or craft show before selecting your purchases
- Take up photography — walk through a scenic location on a hunt for photo opportunities
- Sign up for a community 5K or 10K walking/running event
- Hike on a wilderness trail
- Vary your pace when walking, start out slowing then increase your speed, include short bursts of speed walking, then cool down with a slower pace at the end of your walk
- Strap a length of masking tape around your child's waist (sticky side out) so they can gather pretty leaves during the spring, summer, and fall
- Drive to a new walking trail and explore the different scenery
- Contact your local visitor's bureau or historical society and sign up for a walking tour
- Volunteer to walk dogs for an animal shelter
- Organize a community clean-up day and designate areas of the neighborhood for teams to walk through and remove debris as they go
- Meet a friend for lunch at a restaurant you can walk to
- Plan a picnic with friends, family, and children and go for a walk after your meal
- Seek out bargains by walking through your neighborhood looking for garage/yard sales
- Explore nature by keeping a field guide handy when walking
- Skim the newspaper for upcoming events you can walk to such as a garden tour, high school play, or a concert in the park
- Walk around the restaurant or parking lot while waiting to be seated
- Drive to a neighboring community and tour its main street on foot
- Reward yourself for step accomplishments — for example, every time you reach your step goal for the day, put a dollar in a jar and save for a special reward
- Take a step aerobics class
- Spend a day at the beach and walk the shoreline
- Watch for birds while walking; especially during the fall migration

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- Get lost in a corn maze (many are set up during autumn)
- Entice your kids to join you by turning a walk into a scavenger hunt
- Stroll around the field while watching your child's sporting event
- Play a round of golf but pass on the cart
- Instead of talking on the phone with a friend, meet for a walk and talk
- Walk with your kids to the local park

Variety is the Spice of Life

Other activities can count toward your daily steps. Here are some ideas for adding "steps" through minutes spent in other physical activities:

- Sign up for a water aerobics class
- Join a beach or indoor volleyball team
- Play America's favorite pastime — baseball or softball
- Hit the tennis courts
- Dance the night away at a club
- Don't forget the household activities, such as scrubbing floors and vacuuming
- Weed, hoe, rake, and prune — gardening is an everyday way to be more active
- Paddle away calories on a raft, kayak, or canoe trip
- Tour a local trail by bike
- Try in-line skating through your neighborhood
- Take a class in judo or karate
- Swoosh down the slopes — try downhill skiing
- Snowshoe over hills and drifts in the colder months
- Ice skate at a local ice rink
- Enjoy the calm of nature while cross-country skiing on a trail
- Swim laps in a pool — vary your stroke for the best results
- Dive into a lake, river, or ocean for some summertime fun
- Join a Tai Chi or Yoga class for flexibility and relaxation
- Sign up for an aerobics session
- Water-ski over the waves
- Ride your bike to accomplish errands such as going to the library or depositing your paycheck

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