

## Managing Your Weight: Tracking Your Activity

Most people who lose weight and keep it off are active every day. Tracking your activity can help you know how much you are moving. You can start with 30 minutes a day. It doesn't have to be all at once- a few minutes several times a day will help, too. You can also try to do less sitting and more standing.

### Daily Activities

As part of your daily routine, try some of these activities:

- Walk, wheel, or bike ride more, drive less
- Walk up stairs instead of taking an elevator
- Get off the bus a few stops early and walk or the remaining distance
- Mow the lawn with a push mower, rake leaves, garden
- Push a stroller
- Clean the house
- Do exercise or pedal a stationary bike while watching television
- Play actively with children
- Take a brisk 10-minute walk in the morning, at lunch and after dinner
- Stand while talking on the phone
- Plan a walking meeting

### Exercise Routine

As part of your workout or sports routine, try some of these activities:

- Walk or jog
- Use exercise equipment such as the elliptical, etc.
- Bicycle or use an arm pedal bicycle
- Swim or do water aerobics
- Play racket sports
- Golf (pull cart or carry clubs)
- Canoe or kayak
- Cross-country ski
- Play team sports like basketball or volleyball
- Dance
- Take part in an exercise program at work, home, school, or gym

## Fitness Programs

You may find success in sticking to an exercise plan by attending classes or watching an exercise program in your home. View classes that are available at Northwestern Medicine at <https://www.nm.org/patients-and-visitors/classes-and-events>.

## Keeping Track with a Pedometer

Being physically active provides many health benefits including:

- Better heart health
- Lower blood pressure
- Improved cholesterol levels
- Weight control

Make a goal of taking 10,000 steps a day for better health and to lose or maintain a healthy weight. This is about the same as walking 3.5 to 5 miles depending on the length of your steps.

Pedometer Activity Levels	
Sedentary	Less than 5,000 steps per day
Low Activity	5,000 to 7,499 steps per day
Somewhat Active	7,500 to 9,999 steps per day
Active	10,000 to 12,499 steps per day
Highly Active	More than 12,500 steps per day

Pedometers and accelerometers are devices that may be programmed to track:

- Steps taken
- Calories burned
- Distance traveled
- Hours slept
- Active minutes
- Quality of sleep
- Intensity of exercise

You can purchase a device that is worn on your wrist or waistband. Also, several smartphones have tracking apps that you can use

### ***Pedometer Guidelines***

- Keep track of your daily steps for 1 week and then take the average for that week. Increase your activity by 500 steps for the next week and then weekly until you reach your goal.
- Invest in a good quality pair of padded or cushioned shoes.

- Take the highest number of steps that you have walked in a 1- to 2-week period and use it as your everyday step target for another 2 weeks.
- Slowly increase your step count until you reach your step goal every day.
- Stop and consult your doctor if you feel pain or have any physical problems while you are doing the activity.
- If you are unable to walk 30 minutes each day all at one time, then take 5, 10 or 15 minute little walks throughout your day.
- Slowly increase your steps to prevent injury. Consult your doctor first before engaging in any strenuous physical exercise.

There are many types and brands of pedometers and tracking programs available.

### **Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources**

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at [hlc@nm.org](mailto:hlc@nm.org), or by calling 312.926.5465. You may also visit the HLC on the 3rd floor, Galter Pavilion at 251 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at [nm.org](http://nm.org).

*Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.*

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363, the Northwestern Lake Forest Patient Relations manager at 847.535.8282 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

Developed by: NMH Center for Lifestyle Medicine