Research shows that wearing a pedometer and having a daily step goal help to boost motivation to walk! People who use pedometers tend to increase their physical activity by about 2,000 steps (approximately one mile) a day and to reduce their body weight and blood pressure.

A digital step-counter pedometer is a reasonably accurate and reliable device that can be used for most physical activities for which there is a stepping movement of the trunk, hip, and legs. Examples include walking, stair-climbing, cross-country skiing, dancing, household chores, running, and ball sports.

While there are dozens of models of pedometers, a step-only pedometer is one of the simplest. The step-only pedometer requires no calibration or adjustment other than a daily resetting to zero.

Having a step goal is key to increasing physical activity. See the other side of this card for helpful tips on setting your goal and then increasing it to gradually add more and more activity to your lifestyle!
How to use the pedometer

Clip the pedometer onto the front of your belt or waistband directly above the crease-line of one leg of your shorts or slacks (see photo at right). The pedometer should be worn so that is always perpendicular to the floor. If your pedometer has a strap or leash, attach the leash to your belt, belt loop, or waistband. This will prevent losing the pedometer if it accidentally comes unclipped.

Reset the step counter to 0 steps before starting. On many models resetting requires that you hold the reset button down for a few seconds until you see the zero appear.

For the first 3 to 4 days that you use your pedometer, you will be establishing a baseline of the total number of steps and movements you take during a routine day at home and work. Most people who are just beginning a program of physical activity find that they take 1,000 to 3,000 steps per day.

Use your baseline as a starting point unique to you, and set a goal to increase your steps each week. Challenge yourself to increase your daily steps by 500. On a weekly basis assess how well you did at meeting your goal, and, based on your achievement, set a new goal for the next week.

You may keep the same goal if you didn’t quite reach it, or you might challenge yourself to increase another 500 steps above what you successfully achieved. While the average American takes between 3,000 and 5,000 steps each day, 10,000 steps, or about 5 miles, is the recommended goal for most adults. Be realistic in your efforts to achieve that goal, but know that you can most likely reach it by gradually boosting your total steps each week.