

# The Couch Champion

## ✓ Your Goal: See Benefits

- Write a list of the benefits (other than weight loss) of engaging in more physical activity.
- Make the connection between being more active and boosting your energy level. For example, rate your energy level after a walk by asking yourself, “Do I feel more energetic, less energetic, or the same after walking?”
- Understand that you can be more active without sweating or feeling uncomfortable. Daily activities don’t have to be strenuous to provide benefits.

## ✓ Your Goal: Move More

- Sneak activity into your daily routine by:
  - ▶ Taking stairs instead of elevators
  - ▶ Parking your car farther away
  - ▶ Walking to a coworker’s desk instead of e-mailing
  - ▶ Walking during your lunch hour
  - ▶ Getting off the bus or train one stop earlier
  - ▶ Walking to mail a letter
  - ▶ Walking a child to school
  - ▶ Walking your dog longer
- Build toward long-term goals. You could begin with a commitment to walk 5 to 10 minutes each day and work up to a longer-term goal of at least 30 minutes of walking each day. (Walking for 60 minutes would provide even greater weight-loss benefits.)
- Write down a plan (such as waking up earlier or going to the park after work) that will fulfill your daily walking goals. Include whether you will aim for one 30-minute walking session or several shorter sessions each day.
- Understand that all activities burn calories, but some burn more. For example, check the Calorie-Burning Activities chart to compare the calories burned during 30 minutes of various activities. (Note that people with different body weights will burn calories at different rates.)

Calorie-Burning Activities		
Activity	Calories Burned by a 150-Pound Person	Calories Burned by a 220-Pound Person
Sleeping	31	45
Reclining and reading	34	50
Sitting, playing with children	85	125
Vacuuming	119	175
Very brisk walking (4 miles per hour)	170	250
Biking, moderate effort	273	400
Running at a pace of 1 mile in 9 minutes	374	550

## ✓ **Your Goal: Count Steps**

- Wear a step counter (pedometer) daily to track how many steps you take:
  - ▶ Choose a pedometer that counts steps, not miles.
  - ▶ Clip the pedometer to your waistband in line with the front midline of your thigh.
  - ▶ Check to see whether your pedometer is working correctly by setting it to zero and then counting while you walk 100 steps. If the pedometer number is between 90 and 110 steps when you finish walking, it is working fine. If the number is not in that range, try moving the pedometer closer to or farther from your belly button and then checking it again. If it is still not counting correctly, you may want to return it and try another brand.
  - ▶ Use your pedometer for three days to calculate, on average, how many steps you walk each day.
- Write down your average daily steps in an activity log, or use an online exercise tracker.

### **Tips for Setting Walking Goals**

- Each week, set a goal to increase your daily steps. In the first week, aim to add 250–500 steps each day. Each week that follows, increase the goal by another 250–500 steps per day.
- Set a long-term goal to take 10,000 steps (the equivalent of about 3 to 5 miles) per day. This may take you weeks or months depending on your starting point.
- Set a goal to increase the pace that you walk. To make your heart and lungs stronger, you need to be walking at a brisk pace, not strolling.
- Even after you meet goals, continue to record your daily steps taken, and bring in logs to discuss at future appointments.

## ✓ **Your Goal: Buddy Up**

- Think about the people (or pets) in your life who can be your walking buddies, tennis or bowling friends, or exercise partners.
- Think about hiring a personal trainer who can help you become more active.
- Write a specific plan for buddying up that includes:
  - ▶ Who you will buddy up with?
  - ▶ What type of activity you will do together?
  - ▶ When and where you will do the activity?
  - ▶ For how long?