

Pedestrians, please plan to use pedometer pointers

Pedometers are the latest craze in fitness equipment. Like stair steppers, rowing machines and stationary bicycles, pedometers will not help anyone achieve fitness unless they are put to use.

Many of us think we are more active than we really are. Pedometers can give a more accurate measure of activity. It may be shocking to find out how few steps we actually take in a typical day.

Pedometers can be a great motivational tool as you see your step count climb. A quick check lets you see at a glance how active you've been, and spur you on to get in a few more steps. But, simply wearing the pedometer is not enough. To be of real value, pedometer readings must be recorded so you can see if you are meeting your activity goals.

Pedometers can be used on a daily basis to keep track of total steps, or only when you choose to get some exercise. Wearing the pedometer daily has a couple of advantages. It gives you a better overall picture of how active you are and

you are more likely to keep using it.

Along with counting steps, pedometers that calculate distance, time spent in activity and calories used are also available. Calculating distance and calories requires some programming on the part of the user. The calorie use feature is especially prone to inaccuracy. Simplicity has its merits, so be sure you will use these extra features before paying for them.

Of course, price varies too. Inexpensive pedometers tend to be noisy, harder to use, and may not last as long as those of better quality. Expect to pay \$20 to \$25 for a good quality, simple pedometer at sporting goods stores or from web-based catalogs. Be sure to buy a safety leash or strap if available to keep the pedometer from falling to the floor or into the toilet. If buying locally, ask the sales clerk to open the package so you can try it on and read the instructions that come with it.

Some pedometers also come with a log book for keep-

ing track of your steps or miles. You may instead want to purchase a little pocket notebook to jot down the date and your date. Keeping a log is a very important part of using the pedometer.

These tips may help you use a pedometer properly.

- Keep the pedometer close to the body and as horizontal as possible. Pedometers must be parallel to the ground to work correctly. If tilted to one side or if it does not fit snugly next to the body, it will not be accurate. Attach the pedometer to a belt or waste band close to the body. Women may have to attach the pedometer to their underclothes if wearing a loose fitting jumper or dress.

- The two most common places for accurate placement are directly above the knee or on the side over the hip. Experiment with placement to find the best spot.

- Try out different positions for the pedometer by walking 50 or 100 steps on a level surface and comparing that number to the reading on your pedometer. Be sure to put the pedometer on first and reset it to zero just before you take the

first step.

- Keep in mind that waking on slopes, stairs, or bent over will affect the accuracy.

- Develop a routine for putting on the pedometer in the morning and for recording the steps when you take it off at bedtime.

- If your pedometer can be programmed to convert steps to distance, follow instructions carefully.

- Use the first week with your pedometer to establish a baseline. That is, go about your normal daily routine while wearing your pedometer, but don't change your activity pattern. After you see what you've been doing, you can set a goal that you can reach, for example, an additional 200 steps per day.

- While it is important to make your goal fit you, people often ask how many steps they should take. Most people will see improvement in their energy level, strength and lung capacity if they increase by 2000 steps per day. That's about a mile or approximately 15 to 20 minutes of walking, something that almost everyone can do.

(Source: Linda S. Rellegert MS, Nutrition and Health Education Specialist University of Missouri Extension Service)

Reception will honor veterans

A public reception honoring recently returned veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq will be held at the Willamette Valley Vineyards, 8800 Enchanted Way SE in Turner on Saturday, December 18, from 4-7 p.m. Veterans and their families are invited to attend. Veterans are encouraged but not required to appear in uniform. The public is also welcome. The reception, which will feature cheese and wine, is being provided at not cost to the public.

In addition to the opportunity to meet veterans who served in the Middle East, participants will learn about plans for the Afgan-Iraqi Freedom War Memorial from the founders of the Memorial effort, Clay and MJ Kesterson of Independence.

Following the loss of their son, Army Warrant Officer Erik Kesterson, in a helicopter crash in Iraq, the Kesterson formed a foundation for the creation of a memorial honoring all Oregon servicemembers who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq. To date they have a design, a proposed site on the grounds of the Oregon Veterans' Building in Salem, and have begun fundraising efforts.

Those in attendance at the Willamette Valley Vineyards reception may make a donation to the Memorial Fund. For more information or to RSVP, call Lisa Fenchel at 503-434-5981. For directions to the event, call 1-800-344-9463.



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