

6 Health Benefits Of Adding Just 1,000 Extra Steps A Day

P prevention.com/fitness/health-benefits-of-1000-extra-steps-a-day

7/25/2016

Take a second to ponder the math, and you'll see that it really does add up: 1,000 steps [clocks out to about half a mile](#), which works out to an extra 365,000 steps a year. "That's nearly 180 miles of extra movement, and it will absolutely change the way you look and feel," says Pasternak. Here are some of the perks that come with moving just a little more:

ADVERTISING

1. Your heart won't have to work so hard.

"Simply going from being sedentary to engaging in even modest levels of activity dramatically improves your health and begins decreasing your risk of heart disease," says Michele Olson, PhD, a professor of [exercise](#) physiology at Auburn University at Montgomery. Movement makes your muscles better able to pump blood throughout the body, so your heart rate comes down.

MORE: [How To Start Walking When You Have 50+ Pounds To Lose](#)

2. You'll slash your stroke risk.

Extra activity directly [reduces your chances of having a stroke](#). It also helps [keep your blood pressure in check](#)—which further reduces your stroke risk. Double win!

3. Your cholesterol levels may improve.

Got high LDL, the "bad" kind of cholesterol? Taking an extra 1,000 steps a day [may be enough to make a difference](#). "When you move more, you burn up cholesterol and other lipids in your bloodstream so they have less of a chance of invading and damaging your blood vessels," explains Olson.

MORE: [12 Foods That Lower Cholesterol Naturally](#)

4. You'll stress less.



Photograph by Goodluz/Shutterstock

Taking a short, brisk walk may really be the best way to [clear your head and lift yourself out of a funk](#). The physiological reason is twofold: When you exercise, your body produces feel-good chemicals called endorphins. Physical activity also [cuts levels of cortisol](#)—a stress hormone that can make you feel lousy and raise your risk of a slew of mental and physical health problems, says Pasternak.

MORE: [10 Silent Signals You're Way Too Stressed](#)

5. Your bones will get stronger.

According to the [American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons](#), any type of weight-bearing activity can strengthen your skeleton and fight osteoporosis. Why? Placing weight on your bones makes them work harder, explains Olson. That pressure stimulates cells called osteoblasts, which can turn into new [brand-new bone cells](#).

6. You may lose weight.

OK, so you probably won't shed a ton quickly, but over time there's a payoff. Taking an extra 10,000 steps means you'll torch about 50 more calories a day, or 350 a week, says Nadya Swedan, MD, a board-certified physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist. "In about 10 weeks, you'll be able to notice any pounds you've started to drop." (Walk off 22 pounds in just 8 weeks and get an MP3 player with [Prevention's Walk Off Weight!](#))

To reap any—or all—of these benefits, you'll need to make extra activity a regular thing. "A thousand additional steps a day really add up, but consistency is key," says Pasternak. Some easy ways to make it a habit include snagging the furthest (rather than closest) parking spot to your office door, marching around while you're talking on the phone, and ditching your coffee pot so you have to walk to a local shop for your morning cup.