

Wellness Wednesday



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Walking for Better Health: How Many Steps Should You Aim for?

Walking is a simple yet effective form of exercise that can have a significant impact on your overall health and well-being. But how many steps do you really need to take each day to reap the benefits? According to recent research, it turns out that you don't necessarily need to hit the elusive 10,000-step mark to see improvements in your health. In this Wellness Wednesday, we'll explore the findings of a meta-analysis that sheds light on the optimal number of steps for better health, as well as provide tips on how to incorporate more walking into your daily routine.



The Research Behind Walking and Health

A meta-analysis published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology analyzed data from 17 studies and over 226,000 individuals, highlighting the importance of walking for any amount of steps, no matter how small. Surprisingly, the study found that walking just 3,967 steps or more each day can significantly reduce the risk of death from any cause. Even walking 2,337 steps or more each day can lower the risk of death from cardiovascular disease, which includes both heart disease and stroke.

Increasing your daily step count by 1,000 steps can lead to a 15% lower risk of all-cause mortality, while adding 500 steps brings a 7% lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease. These findings provide a glimmer of hope for those who struggle to reach the commonly recommended goal of 10,000 steps per day.

Debunking the 10,000-Step Myth

For years, the 10,000-step goal has been touted as the ideal benchmark for achieving optimal health. However, this number has proven to be daunting and unattainable for many individuals. Dr. Keith Ferdinand, chair of preventative cardiology at Tulane University School of Medicine, suggests that the 10,000-step recommendation is not necessarily wrong, but rather, the research provides confidence that even moderate activity is better than none.

The Benefits of Walking More Steps

While any amount of walking can be beneficial, the research shows that the more steps you take, the better your well-being. Individuals who walked 20,000 steps or more each day had the lowest risk of premature mortality. However, it's important to note that achieving 10,000 steps per day can still provide significant health benefits. Dr. Ferdinand emphasizes that if you can safely achieve the 10,000-step goal, you may experience even greater benefits in terms of mortality.

How to Incorporate Walking Into Your Daily Routine

If you're wondering how to get more steps in your day, there are various ways to incorporate walking into your routine. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, which can include activities that you may not typically think of as exercise. Moderate housekeeping, gardening, walking with your kids, and even walking your dog can contribute to your overall activity level.

Dr. Ferdinand suggests that it doesn't have to be a purposeful visit to the gym or a structured walking program. Simply being physically active for 150 minutes per week appears to have a positive impact on health. However, it's essential to consider safety precautions, especially during hot summer months when walking outdoors can be risky. Walking inside a shopping mall, utilizing an unused basketball court, or even walking up and down the stairs in your home are alternative options to consider.

The Impact on Older Adults

The research findings hold particular significance for individuals aged 60 and older. The study revealed that the steepest benefits were observed when participants in this age group achieved 6,000 to 10,000 steps per day. Therefore, motivating older adults to incorporate regular walks into their daily routines can significantly improve their overall health and well-being.

Balancing Quantity and Quality

While the study suggests that a lower step count than the commonly recommended 10,000 still provides cardiovascular and mortality benefits, it's important not to settle for the bare minimum. Dr. Ferdinand cautions against interpreting the research findings as an excuse to only aim for 2,000 or 4,000 steps per day. If you can safely and comfortably achieve a higher step count, it is highly encouraged.

Choosing the Right Walking Shoes

When embarking on a walking routine, it's crucial to wear appropriate footwear to ensure comfort and minimize the risk of injury. The right walking shoes can provide orthopedic support, roomy toe boxes, and secure fastenings like Velcro straps. It's best to choose comfortable walking shoes recommended by podiatrists which also prioritize the needs of older individuals, offering features that promote optimal foot health.

Walking is a powerful form of exercise that can bring about numerous health benefits. While the 10,000-step goal may seem unattainable for many, research suggests that any amount of walking can have a positive impact on your well-being. Whether it's 2,000 steps or 10,000 steps, the key is to stay active and incorporate movement into your daily routine. So lace up your walking shoes, grab a buddy for company, and start reaping the benefits of this simple yet effective exercise. Remember, more is better, but some is always better than none.



ZUCCHINI MEATLOAF



INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cup grated zucchini, squeezed dry after
- 6 tablespoons ketchup, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 lb ground turkey, 93% lean
- 2 tablespoons dried onion flakes
- 1/3 cup quick oats, or seasoned bread-crumbs
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon marjoram
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

The Power of Zucchini in Meatloaf

Zucchini is the secret ingredient that takes turkey meatloaf to the next level. Not only does it add moisture and juiciness to the loaf, but it also provides a boost of nutrients. Zucchini is low in calories and packed with vitamins and minerals, making it a healthy addition to any meal. By grating the zucchini and squeezing out the excess liquid, you ensure that the meatloaf stays moist without becoming soggy. This technique allows the flavors of the turkey and other ingredients to shine through, resulting in a perfectly balanced and flavorful dish.

Freezing and Reheating

If you want to make extra turkey meatloaf to enjoy later, freezing is a great option. Simply let the extra meatloaf cool completely before freezing. You can either freeze it whole or slice it for individual servings.

Nutrition Information

Calories per serving: 275 kcal, Carbohydrates: 18 g, Protein: 25.5 g, Fat: 11.5 g, Saturated Fat: 3 g, Cholesterol: 130.5 mg, Sodium: 610.5 mg, Fiber: 2 g, Sugar: 7 g



INSTRUCTIONS



- Preheat your oven to 350°F.
- In a small bowl, combine 2 tablespoons of ketchup with Worcestershire sauce to make the sauce for the meatloaf.
- In a medium bowl, mix together the ground turkey, grated zucchini, dried onion flakes, oats or breadcrumbs, egg, 1/4 cup of ketchup, salt, and marjoram. Ensure that all the ingredients are well incorporated.
- Shape the mixture into a loaf either on a baking sheet or in a loaf pan. If using a baking sheet, make sure to shape the loaf in the center to allow for even cooking.
- Spoon the sauce mixture on top of the meatloaf, spreading it evenly to coat the surface.
- Place the meatloaf in the preheated oven and bake it uncovered for 55 to 60 minutes. The internal temperature should reach 165°F to ensure that the turkey is fully cooked.
- Once the meatloaf is done, remove it from the oven and let it rest for 5 minutes before slicing. This resting period allows the juices to redistribute, resulting in a moist and tender meatloaf.

Zucchini meatloaf made with turkey is a delicious and healthy twist on a classic dish. The grated zucchini adds moisture and nutrients without sacrificing flavor. With the right selection of ingredients and a simple cooking process, you can create a juicy and flavorful meatloaf that your family will love. Whether you serve it with mashed potatoes, rice pilaf, or a side salad, this zucchini meatloaf is sure to become a staple in your household. So go ahead, give it a try, and enjoy a nutritious and satisfying meal!

FEATURED EXERCISE

<https://www.self.com/gallery/bodyweight-exercises-you-can-do-at-home>

Featured Exercise ► Single-Leg Glute Bridges

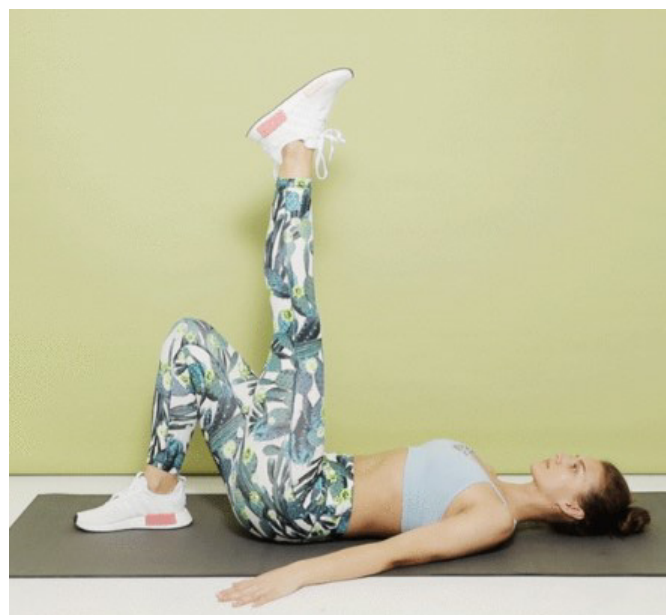


» Do it:

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Lift your left leg straight up above you, toes pointing at the ceiling.
(Your left knee should be directly over your left hip.)
- Raise your hips and lower them back to the ground, keeping your leg in the air.
- Repeat on the other side.

Single-leg glute bridges are an incredible exercise that I'm super excited to talk about! The benefits of incorporating this exercise into your routine are absolutely amazing.

First and foremost, single-leg glute bridges target your glutes like no other exercise. Not only do they help to strengthen and tone your behind, but they also improve your hip stability and balance. Another fantastic benefit is that they engage your core muscles, helping you to develop a strong and stable midsection. Plus, they are a great exercise for improving your overall lower body strength and power. Trust me, once you start doing single-leg glute bridges, you'll wonder how you ever lived without them!

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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



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