



Sensible health and wellness
concepts for employees



Does 10,000 Steps a Day Keep the Doctor Away?



[“An apple a day keeps the doctor away.”](#) This old English proverb was catchy and beneficial by nudging people to add fruit to their diet. Slogans that promote healthy behavior can serve as positive public service announcements. Another common health recommendation is to walk 10,000 steps a day. For many, this feels like an unreachable lofty goal. Where did this number come from and is there medical research to back it up?

Professor Lee of Harvard University researched the [origins of the 10,000-step benchmark](#) and uncovered that it was really a marketing ploy used by a Japanese company selling pedometers in the 1960s. The pedometer was given a catchy name that meant “the 10,000-step meter.” The Japanese character for this number was chosen because it looked like a man walking (apropos for a step counter). This now commonplace health guideline was created by a company looking to attract international customers!

Health consumers have treated this slogan as gospel and jumped on the step counting bandwagon. While 10,000 steps just so happens to be a great daily goal for those looking to stay active, it is not definitive. The [Physical Activity Guidelines](#) for Americans from the US Department of Health and Human Services cite a different set of recommendations for heart health backed by research. The point of the guidance from the American Heart Association is that attempts to limit sitting time and move more result in a correlating health benefit period. This is good news for people who are at the beginning of their physical activity journey. Each step contributes to your health outcomes, regardless of whether you meet a step goal.

Additionally, the Physical Activity Guidelines communicate recommendations through activity time per week rather than the number of steps taken. Adults are recommended to engage in 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity



aerobic physical activity to see substantial health benefits. While walking may be your exercise of choice, this also opens the door to other activities like yoga, stretching, or swimming that do not include a step goal.

Incremental activity changes can make a big difference. Remind yourself of this the next time you are beating yourself up for not meeting this five-digit step goal. Try limiting your sitting time, adding a walk to your morning routine or standing for part of your workday. Regardless of the method you choose, get moving!

This newsletter contains general health information and is not a substitute for your doctor's care. You should consult an appropriate health care professional for your specific needs. Some treatments mentioned in this newsletter may not be covered by your health plan. Please refer to your benefit plan documents for information about coverage.

Parslied Brown Rice Pilaf

Makes 4 servings

This simple side plays up the brightness of fresh parsley. This unassuming herb is pleasantly verdant and pairs wonderfully with zippy lemon zest and nutty brown rice. Compared with unenriched white rice, brown rice is higher in fiber, protein, B vitamins, iron, and magnesium. New research shows that eating whole grains like brown rice daily reduces colorectal cancer risk, and the more you eat the lower your risk.



INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup uncooked brown rice
2 teaspoons olive oil
1/3 cup chopped yellow onion
1/4 cup chopped carrot
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 teaspoons grated lemon rind
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Calories: 117
Fat: 3g
Carbohydrates: 20g
Protein: 2g
Sodium: 249mg
Fiber: 2g

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook rice according to package directions, omitting salt and fat.
2. While rice cooks, heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium. Add onion and carrot; cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 5 minutes. Add garlic; cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in parsley, rind, salt, and pepper.
3. Place cooked rice in a large bowl, and fluff with a fork. Add onion mixture and stir to combine.