

Go for a Walk

Spring is finally here and the weather beckons us to be outside. One of the easiest and healthiest changes you can make is to increase your physical activity by taking regular walks. Some of us have gotten in the habit of wearing digital pedometers, the kind that keeps count of all the steps you take during the day. I have found that when I'm confined to my office and computer that I only take 2-3000 steps per day or less. But when I get outside for a 20-30 minute walk, the number of steps climb to 6-7000!

What is a healthy number of steps you need to do each day? Research has discovered that people who spend at least 2,000 calories per week in conscious activity (climbing stairs, walking and intentional exercise) have notably better health profiles and live longer than people who are not active (sedentary). When people walk 10,000 steps per day they use 300-450 calories. Multiply this amount over a week and you will have walked over 70,000 steps and have burned the 2,000 calories.

You know that walking is good and healthy for you, but what will motivate you to do it? The little pedometer is a great motivator. It brings to your consciousness how active you aren't and it's presence urges you to increase those numbers. You can check your local sports equipment suppliers or www.creativewalking.com or www.walking.about.com for information and purchase of pedometers. Those persons who are enrolled with the IAC Wellmark health insurance will be eligible to sign up for the Virgin HealthMiles pedometer at Annual Conference. More information will be coming in the pre-conference packet.

Where should you walk? Around your neighborhood is a good start. Up and down your company or school hallways, or in our many malls. Iowa is also blessed with many trails. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation maintains a website that gives the location and description of trails around the state. Go to inhf.org for more information. Many of the County Conservation areas have nature trails that can be used for walking. Check with each County's Conservation Commission or Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

I hope that this has helped you to do one little change that may have a lasting effect upon your life. As you walk, remember:

"Our steps are made firm by the Lord" Psalm 37:23

Blessings upon you as you become more active.

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