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Ghani Jantan with John Walker

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# BRITAIN'S WIDE OPEN TO



# Why it's time to step up your fitness

Picture: SHUTTERSTOCK



**MILES BETTER:** Walking is the key

**A** NEW study has revealed that women are putting their health at risk by walking about 1,000 fewer steps each day than men. Drawing on data from smartphones around the world, the research from Stanford University in the US found that men take an average of 5,982 steps per day while women manage only 4,908.

Both numbers fall far short of the Government recommendation of 10,000 steps per day (about five miles), which is essential for good health and fitness.

Lucy Wilkinson, senior cardiac nurse at the British Heart Foundation, says: "We know women

As research reveals women are less active each day than men, **HANNAH BRITT** asks the experts for advice on how to get moving

do less physical activity than men as looking after their home and children can leave them with less time to exercise.

"However, taking more steps a day can help maintain a healthy weight, reduce cholesterol and blood pressure."

Thankfully this is easy to do, even if you don't have much spare time.

Celebrity personal trainer Dalton Wong (twentytwotraining.com), who counts Hollywood star Jennifer

Lawrence among his clients, says wearing a fitness band can help track your daily movements.

"An activity tracker can help you to work out your general fitness levels. It will show you how many steps you've done and can be set up to remind you to move every hour," he says.

Try the Misfit Ray Activity Tracker, £79.99 (misfit.com) that automatically tracks steps, distance and calories.

Dalton says it can be easier to achieve your daily 10,000 steps if you look at your week as a whole.

"If you are 1,000 steps short of your goal one day, make it up the next day or even at the weekend. The most important thing is to not beat yourself up about it. A nice long walk at the weekend is much more beneficial than 1,000 steps here and there."

Throughout the week making small changes to your routine can make a real difference to your overall step count.

"Get off the train or the bus a stop early or walk to the shops

instead of driving. During your lunch break, walk to the park with friends so you can eat your lunch outside," says Dalton.

"When you are shopping, take the stairs or walk up the escalators. When you fancy a coffee, don't go to the nearest coffee shop but walk to one that is further away. Getting those steps in is easier when you have a purpose.

"At work get up and walk around the office, for example to the water machine, at least once an hour."

The upcoming school holidays are the perfect time to get the whole family involved.

A recent study from charity UK Active and the University of Essex revealed that pupils tend to return to school in September more overweight and less fit than when the summer break began.

Scientists found this was because children spent much of their time away from school in front of tablets and the television rather than running around.

"Don't use your children as an excuse to be sedentary," says Dalton.

"Turn the television off and go to the park or have some active play in the garden.

"Set up a three-legged race and join in or walk to the park to feed the ducks."

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