

Let's Talk About Those 10,000 Steps, Shall We?

I'm assuming everyone's heard about the idea that walking 10,000 steps a day is the path to health. So I decided to look into whether or not that's true.

What blindsided me were the articles that claim the whole idea originated as a marketing strategy in Japan in the 1960s. According to an article you can read here: (<http://www.livescience.com/43956-walking-10000-steps-healthy.html>) a company selling pedometers called them "manpo kei" which roughly translates to "10,000 steps" and that caught on with walking groups in Japan.

Not a big leap to studying whether or not increasing daily walking to 10,000 steps has health benefits.

Before we go any further, let me tell you. I know the type of shifts people work in dispatch, and under what conditions. A person in a recent presentation of mine said, "I don't have time enough to take a BATHROOM break, never mind spend [X] minutes doing THAT at work!" I could not have spoken that frustration in more eloquent fashion. In my dispatch center also known as, "a room," I would have to make the trip from door to opposite wall 138.8888 times a twelve hour shift to get in 10,000 steps. Yes. I did the math. But not without a calculator!

Let's get back to the health benefits, though. The American Heart Association doesn't address the 10K a day idea but does say walking 30 minutes a day can improve your blood pressure, lipid profile, reduce your risk of coronary disease and stroke as well as *maintain* your body weight and lower the risk of obesity. I got that info from their page here: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/PhysicalActivity/Walking/Why-Walking_UCM_461770_Article.jsp#mainContent

Nowhere in either of the items referenced above does anyone talk about losing weight. In fact, a recent meta study (a study of many studies) shows that 10K a day doesn't result in significant weight loss. You can read an article about that study here: <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/eat-run/2014/05/21/why-10-000-steps-a-day-wont-make-you-thin>

And if you look closely, there are studies within the meta study that *do* show significant weight loss. I have two thoughts about that: Just another reason to revile meta studies... and.... is your head spinning yet? Because mine sure is!

Look. We live in an age of readily available data. Sometimes conflicting and confusing data. I think the bottom line here is this: there are health benefits to walking. Serious benefits. Enough to maybe try fitting it in where you can. Is it 10K a day? Given our schedules, likely not. Can you fit in 30 minutes a day for [X] days a week? That's up to you. What fits with your life? What's your motivation? And more important, what might this look like in your comm center?

Up next: The Treadmill Workstation