HIGHER HEIGHTS FITNESS

BRECKSVILLE, OHIO

The NEAT & Steps Cheat Sheet

Real step targets by age, plus how to raise your number without a dedicated walk.

01 REAL STEP TARGETS, BY AGE

Drawn from a pooled analysis of 15 cohorts and nearly 50,000 adults. Past these numbers the benefit plateaus — more isn't harmful, it just stops adding much.

AGE GROUP	STEPS WHERE BENEFIT LEVELS OFF
Under 60	~8,000–10,000 steps/day
60 and older	~6,000–8,000 steps/day
Starting from a low baseline	Even ~4,400 steps (from ~2,700) was linked to 41% lower mortality risk — the first steps matter most

02 WHY YOUR NUMBER MATTERS MORE THAN YOUR WORKOUT ALONE

NEAT (non-exercise activity thermogenesis) is everything you burn outside of sleep, food and workouts. Lab measurements found it can differ by roughly 100–800 cal/day between people, and rough estimates comparing desk work with heavy physical labor run higher still (estimates, not measured results). One workout can't fully offset a day spent mostly seated.

03 HOW TO RAISE NEAT WITHOUT A DEDICATED WALK

TACTIC	WHY IT WORKS
2–5 min walk after each meal	Cuts post-meal blood sugar spikes by ~17% on average
Stand or pace during calls	Converts sedentary time to light activity at no extra time cost
Park farther / take the stairs	Small, repeated additions that don't require "finding time"
Hourly movement reminder	Breaking up long sitting matters independent of total activity

04 WHAT "150 MIN/WEEK" LOOKS LIKE IN STEPS

CDC/WHO/ACSM guidance is given in minutes, not steps. Moderate cadence is ~100 steps/min, so 150 min/week of walking works out to roughly 15,000 steps of dedicated walking across the week.

> **WHY THIS MATTERS FOR THE NERVOUS SYSTEM & GUT**
>
> Movement spread across the day keeps your body cycling between activity and rest instead of sitting in one state for hours — which matters for digestion and blood sugar regulation specifically, not just total calories burned.

05 QUICK TAKEAWAYS

- **The first steps matter most**
  Going from a low baseline to even 4,000–5,000 steps produces a large share of the total benefit.
- **Benefit plateaus, it doesn't demand 10,000**
  Real research shows diminishing returns around 6,000–10,000, depending on age.
- **Timing beats total, sometimes**
  A short walk right after eating does more for blood sugar than the same steps at a random time.

Sources: Paluch et al., Lancet Public Health (2022) · Lee et al., JAMA Intern. Med. (2019) · Levine et al., ATVB (2006) · Buffey et al., Sports Medicine (2022).
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