



How do I become a Walking Duke?

Becoming a Walking Duke is easy! All Duquesne University faculty, staff, and administrative employees are eligible*. Simply download the application form from the Walking Dukes website, complete and submit it to Shannon Foster, Assistant Director, Power Center, room 210 or email fosters1@duq.edu.

*We apologize; Duquesne University students and non Duquesne University employees are currently unable to participate, including spouses or friends of eligible employees.

How do I record my steps/miles?

1. ONLINE: Utilize MyStart! online tracking through the American Heart Association. MyStart! is a free tool that can help you make positive lifestyle changes through physical activity. Track your daily physical activity and view and print weekly summaries of your progress. (1) Go to: www.mystartonline.org to create your **FREE** account; Register as a first time user and begin logging your miles! (2) Plot your walking routes on your personal map (3) Log your times or distances in the activity diary.

Other applications include creating your own profile to make contact with an online support network. Or try the nutrition diary to assist with making healthy dietary choices. The potential is unlimited, however, the activity diary is the main component used for the walking program.

OR

2. By Hand (Record your miles or steps using the Walking Dukes scorecard): The MyStart! Tracking tool offered through the American Heart Association is a legitimate and reputable resource; however, we understand not everyone is comfortable creating online profiles and using online programs. For this reason, the fitness & wellness staff have created an easy to use scorecard to assist with tracking your miles. (Download the form from the Walking Dukes website and start tracking!) Remember to keep your forms on hand to submit copies for your milestone prizes.

What is a Milestone?

During your time as a Walking Duke, you will have the opportunity to log your steps/miles to complete and achieve stepping milestones. Individual rewards will be given as soon as you achieve a designated stepping milestone. The prizes are listed on the Walking Dukes' website.

Can I log steps walked after work, during my normal workday and on weekends?

Yes, you should log all steps walked during your day, including weekends!

How do I get my pedometer?

The first 50 individuals to submit their application for the Walking Dukes program will receive a FREE pedometer. It will be delivered with walking club information to the participant's office upon receipt of a completed application.

Further pedometers can be purchased through the Recreation Department for a cost of \$12. For more information, contact Shannon Foster, Assistant Director, fosters1@duq.edu.

What if my pedometer seems inaccurate?

For best results, clip the pedometer firmly at your waist. It should be located above the knee at the waist. It is important to insure that the case is positioned straight up and down. If the pedometer is tilted, it may count fewer steps as the pedometer's pendulum is not free to swing properly.

Where can I walk?

You can walk anywhere! Walk on the Power Center cardiovascular equipment or walking track on level 3M. [*MyStart!online*](#) can help you map out walking routes on campus or explore all of Pittsburgh. Remember to track steps you take after work, on vacation, and with your family and friends.

What's the best time of day to walk?

It varies from one person to the next. The real question is, when are you most willing and able to walk? That's the best time for you.

Should I eat before I walk?

Again, it varies from one person to the next. Try to eat something before a morning walk. But if planning to go at a brisk pace or to do some interval training, keep meals small and simple--maybe a piece of fruit, or some low-fat or nonfat yogurt. The human body doesn't particularly like digesting food and exercising hard at the same time. That said, a leisurely stroll after a large meal may enhance digestion and burn a few extra calories. But walking before a meal works just as well, provided you don't have any problems with your blood sugar. If that meal happens to be breakfast, be sure to drink a nice, tall glass of water before you head out. Your body may be somewhat dehydrated after a night's sleep.

What's the simplest way to determine how fast I'm walking?

The easiest way to gauge your speed without wearing a pedometer--or getting in your car and measuring mileage, which can be pretty difficult unless you walk along a street--is to count your number of steps per minute. The experts use this number to calculate pace, based on an average stride length of 2½ feet. (Stride length is the distance from the heel of the front foot to the toes of the back foot when you're taking a step.) They've already done the math for you.

- 70 steps per minute = 30 minutes per mile, or 2 miles per hour.
- 105 steps per minute = 20 minutes per mile, or 3 miles per hour.
- 140 steps per minute = 15 minutes per mile, or 4 miles per hour.

If you pay attention to your steps, after a while you'll be able to estimate your pace fairly accurately without bothering to count. You'll just know what a 20-minute mile or a 15-minute mile feels like.

How many calories do I burn by walking a mile?

The average 150-pound person burns between 80 and 100 calories per mile. However, that number changes depending on height, weight, fitness level, terrain, clothing, temperature, and many other factors. If your goal is to lose weight, forget about the numbers! Instead, develop a healthy eating plan that you can live with, incorporate as much physical activity into your daily routine as possible, and try to walk for at least ½ hour a day.

When should I get new shoes?

Replace your walking shoes every 6 months or 600 miles, whichever comes first. At that point, it doesn't matter if the shoes still look great; they've lost a lot of their cushioning.

How can I evaluate my fitness level as a walker?

James Rippe, MD, has developed a special formula to help walkers assess their fitness:

- Find a flat 1-mile loop. Warm up for 5 minutes, stretching your calves and hamstrings.
- Then, walk the mile as quickly as you can without running out of steam.
- Compare your time against the benchmark for your age group.
 - **Under 30:** If you can walk a mile in 13 minutes, you're in great shape!
 - **30 to 39:** A 14-minute mile puts you in the "great shape" category.
 - **40 to 49:** Cover a mile in just under 15 minutes (14 minutes, 42 seconds), and you're at the top level of fitness for your age group.
 - **50 to 69:** Doing a 15-minute mile is excellent.
 - **70 or over:** If you can walk a mile in 18 minutes, 18 seconds, you're very fit for your age.

If you exceed the ideal time for your age group by 3 to 6 minutes, you're not in the best shape aerobically. But don't worry, just keep walking. Regular, consistent exercise can lower your time.

My hands swell when I walk. Is this a problem?

Swelling in your hands is normal. When you swing your arms, the blood rushes down into your fingers. It isn't harmful, but it could be uncomfortable, especially if you wear rings. It's a good idea to take off your rings before you go walking. If the swelling bothers you, try squeezing your hands into fists from time to time while you walk. This helps push blood back from the fingers. Some people carry small rubber balls to squeeze. If you notice the swelling doesn't go away after awhile, it might be time to check in with your doctor.

Help! I'm having pain in the front of my lower legs. What is it?

It sounds like shin splints, a common problem among beginning walkers. It results from doing too much too soon. Your shin and calf muscles cramp from overuse and you notice a burning pain in your shins. To avoid shin splints, increase your distance and pace gradually, and always take time to warm up before doing any speed work. If you've already overdone it, try slowing your pace. If you're still in pain, here are a couple strategies to help:

- Try stretching your calf muscles. Stand facing the nearest wall or tree, then lean forward, putting your palms against the wall or tree and keeping your heels flat on the ground. Or sit on a bench with your legs straight out in front of you, and flex your feet toward you.
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- Apply ice for 15 minutes after exercise if the pain persists. Be sure to wrap the ice in a towel, to protect your skin from the cold.
- Try new footwear. Often old or improper footwear can contribute to shin splints. It's not a bad idea to consult a local footwear company to get a custom fit.
- Try walking on a different surface. If you always walk on concrete, try another trail that takes you "off the beaten path." Walk on grass, dirt, or even the track on campus. Hard surfaces put more stress on the muscles that experience shin splints.

I have heel pain. What should I do?

Heel pain becomes increasingly common with age, especially among the over-40 crowd. Often it results from a condition called plantar fasciitis --that's inflammation of the tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot. As this tissue becomes overstretched and swollen, it produces sharp pain, especially first thing in the morning when you get out of bed. The pain eases as you walk around, but it can come back, especially if you sit for a long time. As we age, our body's tissues become less pliable. This is why stretching is so important.

Here are a couple solutions to the problem:

- Stretching your calf muscles may help. Stand facing the nearest wall or tree, then lean forward, putting your palms against the wall or tree and keeping your heels flat on the ground. Or sit on a bench with your legs straight out in front of you, and flex your feet toward you.
- You may need better walking shoes. Improper support may cause your feet to move.
- Try some self-massage. Put a tennis ball on the floor and roll the bottom of your foot over it several times a day (an easy thing to do while sitting at your desk!).
- If you have new footwear and are still experiencing problems after a couple weeks, it might be time to schedule an appointment with a podiatrist or physical therapist. You may be fitted with custom orthotics (specially-designed shoe inserts) to solve the problem.
- Remember: when in doubt you should consult with your doctor.

How can I avoid blisters?

A bad case of blisters can knock a beginning walker right off her/his feet. More experienced walkers who step up their workouts or switch to hiking can encounter problems, too.

Here's how to keep your feet blister-free.

- Wear two pairs of sock or high-tech socks made from fibers that wick away moisture.
- When you feel a "hot spot" on your foot, act right away. Take off your shoe and apply moleskin or an adhesive bandage over the affected area.
- Make sure that your shoes fit both feet. Often one foot is larger than the other. The friction created by wearing the wrong-size shoe--whether it's too small or too large--can lead to blisters.

I've reached 500,000 (or 1,000,000 or 1,500,000) steps...now what?

The answer should be: Great job! You've reached a milestone and you should be handsomely rewarded! Submit your tracking sheet for confirmation to Shannon Foster, Assistant Director via email, fosters1@duq.edu or stop the Recreation Department, room 210. Your prize will be delivered to your office or given directly to you! Congratulations and keep walking!!!