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How Many Daily Steps You Need To Reduce Your Risk Of Chronic Disease

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For a long time, getting 10,000 steps a day was a goal for many people. However, that digit has since been debunked: “10,000 steps is kind of an arbitrary number,” Catherine Hagan Vargo, a physical therapist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, previously told HuffPost.



While the 10,000-step number may not be as valuable as once thought – and it can be a challenging daily step goal for most people – a new study shows a more realistic number might improve certain health outcomes.

The research published in Nature Journal found that walking 8200 steps daily is linked to a lower chance of developing certain conditions and chronic diseases.

Findings

The recent study used data from the National Institutes of Health’s nationwide All of Us Research Programme, which focuses on underrepresented communities and uses various resources from electronic records, fitness trackers and more to determine the results.

The study tracked 6042 people ages 41 to 67 using electronic health records from Fitbit fitness trackers. Participants’ data were studied over four years, and all participants had to agree to wear their Fitbit for at least 10 hours a day.

Specifically, getting 8200 steps daily resulted in a lower chance of obesity, gastroesophageal reflux disease, sleep apnea and major depressive disorder. The risk for these issues continued to lower the more steps people got beyond that. Getting between 8,000 and 9,000 steps each day resulted in a lower risk of diabetes and hypertension — but that risk did not further decrease for people who took more than 9000 steps a day.

It’s worth noting one significant caveat: There was a considerable lack of diversity in the study — 84 per cent of participants were white, 73 per cent were women and 71 per cent had a college degree. Additionally, the participants had a lower rate of medical comorbidities when compared to other populations. So, more research is needed to determine if these results are true for other groups of people, too.

There are many different ways to reach an 8,200-step goal

You can achieve your goal in many ways — you can do multiple small walks throughout the day, take a long hike or even go on an indoor walk at a mall or shopping center. Switching up your walks from time to time is a good idea so you don't get bored. If you generally find walking dull, you can try interval walks, which employ fast/slow spurts to achieve faster walking results and give your mind something to focus on. You can also try calling a friend while you walk, listening to an interesting podcast or making a playlist of your favorite songs.

“Engagement is a huge component in making sure people can commit” to exercise, Dr Tamanna Singh, a clinical cardiologist and co-director of the sports cardiology center at Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, told HuffPost