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Every step above 2,200 steps a day reduces risk of early death, study finds

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Walking up to 10,000 steps a day lowers the risk of heart disease and early death, even when spending the rest of the day sedentary, research suggests.



The study, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, found that every extra step above 2,200 steps a day — up to about 10,000 — reduces these risks, regardless of how much of the remaining time is spent sitting.

Experts found the lowest risk of early death was among people who took 9,000 to 10,500 steps a day. When it came to avoiding stroke and heart attack, the lowest risks were in people taking about 9,700 steps a day.

The study, led by academics at the University of Sydney, analyzed data from more than 70,000 people aged around 61 from the UK Biobank.

For the research, participants wore an accelerometer for seven days to measure their exercise levels. After a seven-year follow-up, 1,633 deaths and 6,190 cardiovascular events such as heart attack or stroke were recorded.

The study concluded that between 9,000 and 10,500 steps a day cut the risk of early death by 39 percent and the risk of a heart attack or stroke by over a fifth.

Although the results also showed that any number of daily steps above 2,200 a day were linked to lower rates of death and heart disease, independent of a person's time spent being sedentary, the benefits increased the more steps people took.

In both cases, half of the benefit was achieved at between 4,000 and 4,500 steps a day.

Julie Ward, senior cardiac nurse at the British Heart Foundation, said: "We know that daily physical activity is essential to help maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce your risk of developing heart conditions and your risk of stroke.

"These hopeful new studies show us that every single step towards making it to 10,000 steps a day counts to reducing risk of death and heart disease. Even low levels of activity can reduce the risk of stroke.

"We encourage everyone to stay active for their heart and circulatory health by doing 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week.

"This can be any activity that fits into your lifestyle, such as taking regular walking breaks away from your computer screen, going to the gym, enjoying exercise classes, or even getting off the bus one stop earlier to get more steps in."

Research suggests every extra step up to 10,000 reduces risk even if rest of the day is sedentary