

## - Walking

### Health

# Walking 7000 steps a day may be enough to keep us healthy

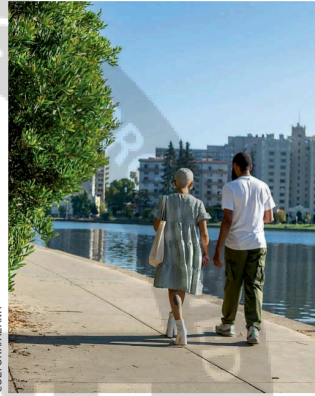
WE ARE often told to aim for 10,000 steps a day to maintain good health, but it turns out that taking just 7000 can significantly reduce the risk of conditions such as heart disease and dementia.

The 10,000 steps target is thought to have originated from a marketing campaign promoting pedometers in Japan. However, research suggests it does have some merit.

To better understand what number of steps is needed to

maintain good health, Melody Ding at the University of Sydney in Australia and her colleagues reviewed 57 studies, published between 2014 and 2025. These covered hundreds of thousands of adults, most of whom hadn't been diagnosed with a serious health condition at the start of those studies.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the more active people were, the better their health outcomes, with 10,000 steps being superior to 7000. But the latter still had serious benefits. The researchers found that people who walked around 7000 steps a day had a 47 per cent lower risk of dying from any cause over the



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Going outside for even a short walk can have many health benefits

studies' follow-up periods, on average, compared with taking just 2000 steps a day. They also had a 25 per cent lower risk of developing cardiovascular disease and a 47 per cent lower risk of dying from it (*The Lancet Public Health*, doi.org/g9t27c).

Taking 7000 steps is also linked to a reduction in the risk of death from cancer by 37 per cent and the risk of developing dementia by 38 per cent.

Ding says it is important not to discourage people from taking 10,000 steps. But 7000 steps is "a lot more accessible" for a lot of people, she says. ■

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