

Pedometer health boost lasts four years

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Credit: Brunel University

Wearing a pedometer to count your daily steps can keep you healthier and more active for as long as four years after using it, a new study shows.

Researchers followed more than 1,000 people aged between 45 and 75 who wore pedometers and had health advice over two 12-week walking schemes.

The people who used the pedometers were still more active three to four years later than they were before they started the trial.

It's the first clear evidence that using a [pedometer](#) has lasting [health benefits](#) for up to 45 months later, says Professor Christina Victor at Brunel University London.

"We knew from a previous study that wearing a pedometer can help make people more active in the short term," Prof Victor explained. "But to get any of the health benefits linked to being more active, such as a lowered risk of [heart disease](#), stroke and type 2 diabetes, people need to be more active in the long term.

"Here we have new evidence that shows short,

simple advice about regularly using a pedometer, whether that means getting leaflets through the post or speaking to a nurse, can increase physical activity three to four years later."

Working with a team from St George's, University of London, Brunel researchers tracked people on two separate schemes designed to make them walk more.

Between 2012 and 2013, 1,023 inactive 45 to 75-year-olds from across South London took part in the PACE-UP trial. They were all given a pedometer and diary and split into three groups – people who had sessions with a nurse to help them become more active, people sent advice by post on how to be more active, and people given no guidance at all. Three years later, people who had guidance, either from a nurse or by post, were still doing an extra 600 steps a day plus 24 minutes more moderate-to-vigorous [physical activity](#) a week.

The similar PACE-Lift trial followed 298 people aged between 60 and 75 in Oxfordshire and Berkshire. This study tracked two groups, one of which had advice from a nurse about how to be more active. Four years later, those who saw a [nurse](#) were still doing 400 more steps a day and 33 minutes more moderate-to-vigorous exercise a week.

"Physical activity levels in adults and older adults 3–4 years after pedometer-based walking interventions: Long-term follow-up of participants from two randomised controlled [trials](#) in UK primary care" is published in *PLOS Medicine*

More information: Tess Harris et al. Physical activity levels in adults and older adults 3–4 years after pedometer-based walking interventions: Long-term follow-up of participants from two randomised controlled trials in UK primary care, *PLOS Medicine* (2018). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1002526](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002526)

Provided by Brunel University

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