



EVERYBODY BENEFITS: EMPLOYEE GUIDE

Get a move on!
Walk ahead to better health.



A woman and a child are walking away from the camera on a grassy hill. The woman is wearing a green shirt and dark pants, and the child is wearing a light-colored shirt and shorts. They are holding hands. The background shows a sunset with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. There are trees and bushes on the left and right sides of the hill.

Don't sit down!

Unless you are a wheelchair user or because of other medical reasons, sitting down too much can be a risk to your health.

The risks associated with inactivity include being overweight or obese, type 2 diabetes and some forms of cancer.

That's why we should all exercise regularly and do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week - and reduce the time we spend sat down.

Sitting for extended periods slows the metabolism, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar and break down body fat, and increases blood pressure.

But UK adults spend around 9 hours a day sitting - whether watching TV, working, gaming, reading, travelling - even sitting down online shopping instead of walking round the shops - that's a staggering sedentary 9 hours - excluding sleeping!

So, isn't it time you got a move on?

10,000.

The magic number.

Brits are only managing a mere 5,951 steps on average – just over half of the magic number.

We all know we should be taking 10,000 steps a day before we hit the hay. But if you work in an office or sit sedentary for most of your working day and commute by car, train or bus, squeezing in 10k steps can be a tall task.

Don't let this figure put you off if it feels unachievable.

Everyone's fitness and mobility levels - and job requirements and daily schedules - are different. Inevitably someone who works in hospitality will move more than someone who works in a call centre!

You wouldn't walk into a gym for the first time and pick up 50kg dumbbells or attempt to run a half marathon on the treadmill.

Same goes for walking. Don't plan to hike one of the 214 Wainwrights as your first attempt!

Set a goal that works for you and gradually build it up over time.

These feet were made for walking

Walking briskly can help you build stamina and make your heart healthier – plus burn off excess calories.

A brisk 10-minute daily walk counts towards your 150 minutes of weekly exercise and is about 3 miles an hour - faster than a stroll but not a jog. You can tell you're walking briskly if you can still talk but you cannot sing!





Pick up the pace

Why did 10,000 steps become the global standard for step tracking?

The idea of walking 10,000 steps a day comes from a marketing campaign for an early pedometer before the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The Japanese character for 10,000 resembles a person walking - so the idea caught on.

Ten thousand steps have since become the gold standard of walking because it's a relatively accessible goal for most people.

But it's important to remember that this number isn't right for everyone.

To decide what a challenging but achievable goal feels like for you, try taking a 20-minute, leisurely walk and see how you feel.

Then adjust the duration, speed, gradient and effort level.

If you find 7,000 steps easy, getting to 10,000 per day shouldn't be too much of a stretch. But if 5,000 is a struggle, re-evaluate your goals and aim for 3,000 then build up gradually to 5, 7 and then 10k.

When setting your own activity goals, consider your age, ability, experience, medical conditions and overall physical fitness. If you suffer from respiratory or cardio conditions, knee, back or joint pain, brisk speed walking or hiking may not be right for you. Check with your GP first before you commit to any new fitness plan.

Health benefits of walking 10,000 steps per day

Can help
lower the risk
of dementia by
50%

Nature and
fresh air can help
relieve symptoms of
anxiety, depression
and **improve mental
clarity**

Helps **reduce knee
and joint pain** in
individuals with
arthritis

Walking **10,000
steps** may be linked
to a lower risk of
cardiovascular disease,
stroke, heart failure,
and 13 types
of cancer



6 steps to moving more

Walking and moving more is a simple, effective and cheap way to boost physical and mental wellbeing. Plus, there's no need for expensive equipment or costly gym memberships – so no excuse!

But while many of us understand the benefits, turning movement, wheeling and walking into a consistent daily habit can be difficult – especially in desk-based roles where movement may be limited to a mouse and keyboard.

Here's how you can make it part of your daily routine.

1

Track your progress

One of the most effective ways to help build healthy habits is by monitoring movement – whether that's counting steps, active time or calories burned. Seeing your weekly progress, whether through a fitness tracker, smartphone app or even a basic pedometer, can be a powerful motivator.

Try using step-tracking tools, such as Apple Health, Google Fit, Strava, Active 10 or MapMyWalk. If you have a wearable device, you can easily monitor steps, distance, calories and heart rate.

In fact, platforms and wearables allow individuals to monitor a range of activity types. They all count – wheeling, cycling, swimming or upper-body cardio – even kitchen dancing!

This visible proof is key. When small actions add up, it helps turn one-off efforts into long-term habits.





2

Don't get stuck in a rut!

Add variety to your daily walks or commute. Find new routes through parks, heritage trails and canal towpaths or beaches and get off the beaten track along rivers, commons, woodlands and nature reserves.

But even if you live and work in a town, you do not have to travel to the countryside to find a beautiful and stimulating walk.

Towns and cities offer interesting walks too – take the back streets, find the green spaces and remember to look up and take in the architectural delights!

Once you're hooked on walking, consider joining a local rambling or walking group - a great way to make new friends and stay motivated.

3

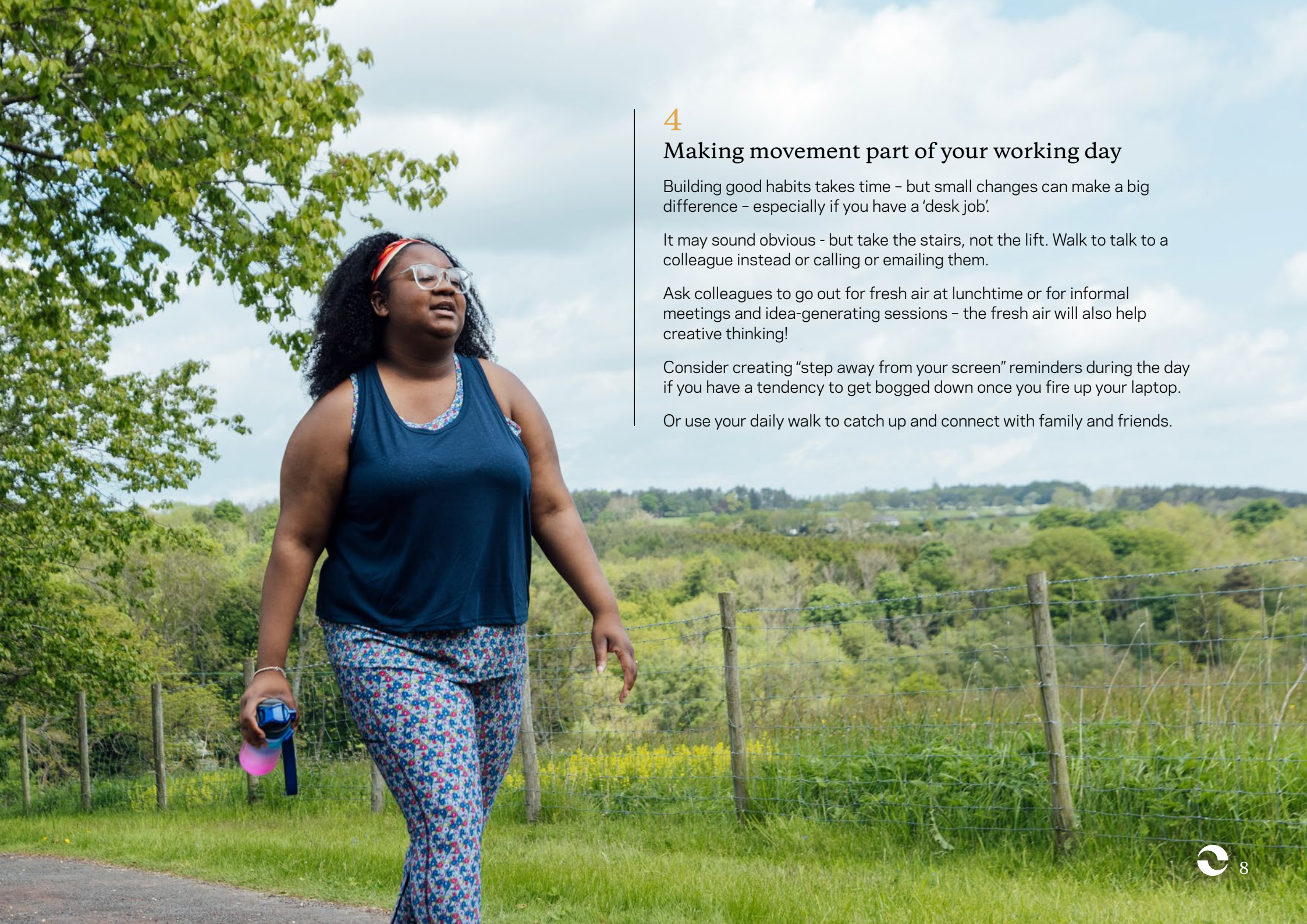
Reward yourself

While intrinsic motivation, such as improved wellbeing, is important, little rewards for reaching personal goals can help kickstart new habits, especially in the early stages.

Incentives don't need to be big to be effective. Treat yourself to a posh coffee, a new pair of trainers or a day out with friends.

But remember, rewards are most effective when they reinforce achievement and consistency, not just one-off good days.

Similarly, don't be hard on yourself if you miss a day – everyone has an off-day or a busy one when 10k is just not on the agenda.



4

Making movement part of your working day

Building good habits takes time – but small changes can make a big difference – especially if you have a ‘desk job’.

It may sound obvious – but take the stairs, not the lift. Walk to talk to a colleague instead of calling or emailing them.

Ask colleagues to go out for fresh air at lunchtime or for informal meetings and idea-generating sessions – the fresh air will also help creative thinking!

Consider creating “step away from your screen” reminders during the day if you have a tendency to get bogged down once you fire up your laptop.

Or use your daily walk to catch up and connect with family and friends.

5

Ditch the car, train and traffic jams!

Ask your manager if they offer a Cycle to Work scheme and find out what wellbeing gamification programmes are available in your workplace. Ask HR if they offer ergonomic desks so that you can stand, not sit at your desk.

If not, throw it into the suggestion box!

If you commute by public transport, get off one stop earlier and do the final mile (or half!) on foot. Active commuting whether walking, wheeling or cycling can be a wonderful way to get active - and save money on fuel and parking.

You will soon reap the rewards of better fitness and finances!

6

Be prepared

Make sure you pack comfortable trainers in your work bag - or leave a pair at work.

Listening to music or a pre-chosen podcast can also get you into a rhythm and help you pick up your pace.





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EB7-1-0525

