

[IMAGE]

Step Up the Competition

By Editorial Staff

Weight loss is the buzzword in health care that isn't going away, guaranteed. That's because too many people want – or need – to lose weight, and permanent, healthy weight loss is often a supreme struggle to attain. We won't delve into the reasons why it's such a challenge in this article; instead, let's explore one way people can overcome those challenges and achieve a healthy weight – and just as importantly, maintain it.

Counting steps is a popular way to ensure you're staying physically active every day (and burning calories in the process); but participating in competitions designed to increase movement is an even better way, suggests research. Overweight or obese people who participate in step-counting competitions log more steps than people who track their own activity without any competition involved.

In the study, findings from which appear in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, a journal of the American Medical Association, researchers grouped 602 overweight adults from 40 states into one of three competition arms or a control arm. Members of the competition arms participated in different games designed to inspire more movement; members of the control arm counted steps, but not as part of a competition.

competition - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark After 24 weeks, competition participants had completed significantly more steps than control participants. Twelve weeks later, they still had significantly increased step counts compared with people in the control group.

The moral to the story: A little competition can go a long way ... especially when it comes to physical activity and weight loss. Talk to your doctor to learn more about how you can achieve the healthy body you deserve.

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