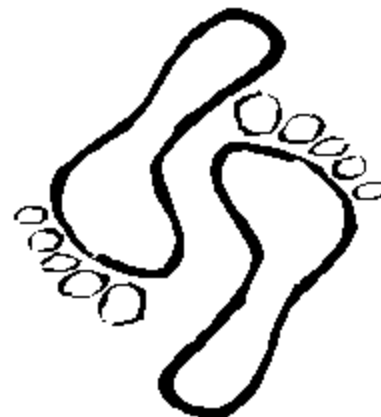


A Consumer's Guide to Buying a Pedometer

Where Can I Buy a Pedometer?

Pedometers can be found in many sporting goods stores. You can also buy them directly from the manufacturer.¹ As pedometers become more popular in your area, you may find them in other local multi-purpose stores as well—check the sporting goods departments. Additionally, many health and physical activity promotion programs give pedometers as prizes, rewards, or motivators.



What Should I Look for in the Features of a Pedometer?

Accuracy

The most important consideration when buying a pedometer is accuracy. You want a pedometer that counts your steps as accurately as possible. The simplest pedometer that accurately counts steps is the only truly essential feature in a pedometer.²

Comfort

Second to accuracy, you will want to consider comfort. If you only plan to wear the pedometer during scheduled physical activity, comfort will not be as important; but, if you plan to wear the pedometer all day, comfort will be an essential component.³

Other Features

Choosing other features is dependent on your personal preferences. You might want to choose other features if they help to motivate you or keep your interest in continued physical activities. Just remember that features such as calories burned and distances covered are estimates (based on individual factors input into the device), and therefore have a larger margin of error than steps counted.

Which Pedometers are Recommended?

When looking at consumer ratings of pedometers, you will often read about a make and model that is accurate and has the features you want, only to find when you go to purchase that pedometer it is no longer available and has been replaced by a newer model. First, note that researchers have reported that no pedometer (of those studied) exceeded 5% error (i.e., 5 steps out of 100).⁴ You can probably expect similar error when validating the accuracy of your own pedometer.⁴ So, try it out and if you find it more than 5% inaccurate, return it and try another make or model. (Note that most pedometers studied have been shown to be more accurate if you walk about 3.5 mph rather than more slowly at 2.5 mph.⁵)



Where Do I Begin?

To give you a starting place as a consumer, current ratings seem to consider the following brands (particular models in parentheses) to produce consistently accurate pedometers:

- Omron (Omron HJ-112),
- New-Lifestyles (NL-2000),
- Sportslite (Sportslite 330, 343, & 345), and
- Yamax Digi-Walker (SW-200 and SW-701).^{4,5,6,7}



Also, making the *Consumer Reports* “quick picks” list for a good combination of accuracy, ease of use, and value were the

- Omron HJ-112,
- Freestyle Tracer, and
- LifeWise 63-619.⁵

Other pedometers worth noting for accuracy in the ratings are the

- Kenz Lifecorder, and
- Walk4Life LS 2525.^{6,8}

References

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- 4 Tudor-Locke, C. Taking steps toward increased physical activity: Using pedometers to measure and motivate. *President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest* 2002; 3:17.
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