HE WibblyWobblyWalkers, Not Fast Just Furious and Occupational Transformation are just some of the 400 teams who are taking part in the staff Steps to Health Challenge.

The staff are getting out daily walking and counting their steps for five weeks, with the goal of reaching 10,000 steps each and every day. That’s the equivalent of eight kilometres or five miles.

Medical experts worldwide agree that taking the magical 10,000 steps each day will give you health benefits such as reducing your risk of heart disease by 50%, lowering your risk of strokes and some cancers, particularly colon and breast cancer. Notwithstanding the fact that you will burn about 500 calories.

Most of us take between 3,000 to 5,000 steps daily, so the challenge is to make up the extra steps during your day at work and at home to increase your fitness and energy levels. Though it may seem like a high amount of steps, it’s very doable. With a little focus and determination, you can bump your number up to 10,000.

The trick is to record your steps on your pedometer and to break it up throughout the day, rather than trying to cram in steps on a treadmill or a monotonous stroll. Remember to encourage your team members. You can even compete against other workplace teams - if there is an appetite for some healthy competition!

If you are not taking part in the current challenge you can still challenge yourself or set up your own workplace team. Here are some tips to help you reach 10,000 steps every day:

- No more looking for the closest parking space! Park further away and walk to your destination
- Walk to a co-worker’s office instead of calling or emailing
- Use a bathroom on a different floor or further away from your office
- Use the stairs instead of the lift
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- Walk on your lunch break
- Take your conference calls on the go
- If you have a few errands to run, park in a central location and walk to each one
- Get off the bus/train one stop beyond where you live and walk home
- Walk kids to school or to the bus stop
- Mow the lawn, do the hovering or hit the shopping centre – it all counts!
- Take extra trips when unloading the car or carrying laundry to the bedroom
- Meet a friend for a walk instead of a coffee, or walk the dog every evening.
- Go for a walk instead of watching TV or scrolling through your Facebook timeline.
- Don’t fast-forward the ads - stand up and march in place!

A lot of work went into co-ordinating this momentous movement of HSE staff so lycra off to Clodagh Armitage, Colm Casey, Willie Conlon, Colette O’Reilly, Norma Deasy, Yvonne Gilligan, Emma Lynam, Sarah O’Brien and Muiris Ryan for their tireless efforts and to Judy Cronin for sharing her experience.

HEALTHCARE staff at St Finbarr’s Hospital Campus in Cork city centre stepped up to the mark recently, clocking up millions of steps as part of a pedometer challenge.

The four-week step challenge saw a total of 1,255 staff take part from across the campus. Each team of five notched up more than one million steps, and 11 teams surpassed the 1.5 million mark. Organisers say they were delighted to give the many staff at the campus the opportunity to start 2017 “on the right foot”.

The overall winner was the “Fast Feet” team from the Department of Public Health, with an impressive 1,940,904 steps between them. The St Finbarr’s campus is the site of a range of HSE and Community Healthcare services, including public health, primary care, community health and orthodontics.

It’s also the location for the Blood Transfusion Service, the IBTS blood bank and residential services. The challenge then moved to Mallow Primary Care Centre in North Cork, where participants showed a similar energy and enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, staff in Skibbereen in West Cork have been running a Kilometre challenge, and are aiming to clock up more than 50,000 kms to raise funds for two local charities – autism services in a local national school, and Skibbereen Day Care Centre.

Teams of six have been clocking up Kilometres on a loop at Skibbereen Community Hospital.

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