

Edinburgh local walks 500 miles for Scottish charity

Since March 16th, active travellers across Scotland have been taking part in Paths for All's Step Count Challenge, an 8-week programme encouraging teams to get walking in the workplace. From NHS Shetland to the Scottish Government, businesses and organizations from around the country have been stepping away to the tune of a healthier lifestyle. One team in Edinburgh turned the challenge into a fund-raiser, daring one of their members to take 1,000,000 steps and walk 500 miles, in 6 weeks.

Team Walkie Talkies, from the University of Edinburgh's Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability, have been organizing walks during their lunch breaks and pledging to take as many steps as possible outside of office hours. Rain or shine, their walks have taken them from their George Square office to Harrison Park, Arthur's Seat, Princes Street Gardens, the Bruntsfield Links and many more locations. Luciana Miu, one of the team's members, took these daily strolls further by pledging to walk 500 miles (roughly equivalent to 1,117,000 steps) by May 1st. Any relation between the challenge goal and the Proclaimers' song is intentional.

Luciana took her 1 millionth step ahead of schedule, on a sunny woodland path in the John Muir coastal trail, on April 19th, and hit the 500 mile mark a week later. Her treks have included Musselburgh, the Roslin Institute and North Berwick, all beginning from the city centre of Edinburgh. She has also committed to 0 use of intra-city public transport until May 16th.

She is undertaking this challenge alongside her team to fund-raise for Challenges Worldwide, a Scottish charity working to develop sustainable businesses in poverty-stricken areas of Zambia, Ghana and Uganda. Her challenge is sponsored by Noom,

a booming mobile healthcare start-up, and health snacks company graze.

“My job is a reasonably desk-based 9 til 5,” said Luciana. “Committing to 1 million steps in 6 weeks meant a lot of time spent walking outside of working hours, which was the biggest challenge. However, I also have meetings on various campuses of the University, including Easter Bush, meaning that I walked there and made up for staff time after hours.”

“I don’t regret taking on the challenge one bit, though. It’s taught me a great lesson on how some charity challenges, especially fitness ones, involve changing your daily routine for a long period of time, rather than dedicating a short outburst of adrenaline to your cause. If anything, it’s made me reconsider the things I take for granted, such as being able to call a cab or flag down a bus as soon as the weather turns. By taking the time out to walk, I’ve also learned a lot more about the city I live in and its surroundings.”

The Step Count Challenge is organized in partnership with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, Breakthrough Breast Cancer, Walk the Walk and Living Streets. In 2014, the challenge saw teams from 232 workplaces take part, taking over 1.7 billion steps in 8 weeks, equivalent to 863,964 miles or 35 trips around the globe. This contributed to an average decrease of 368 minutes of sedentary (sitting) time per week for each participant.

The Step Count Challenge runs until May 10th across Scotland – find out more information at <http://stepcount.org.uk/>.

Submitted by [Luciana Miu](#)

