



# BROOKLYN\_BORN

[Change Banner Image](#)

**154,986**  
SparkPoints

[Info](#)[Photos](#)[Feed](#)[Blogs](#)[Awards](#)[More](#)

## Honest mistakes: Underestimating and Overestimating – the results?

Friday, November 02, 2012

I clicked the wrong category when registering for the SP 5K challenge. OK, no problem. This time I'll be a walker keeping one foot on the ground at all times.

Imagine my surprise to see that we've got world walking records here on SP. Some of the times recorded here beat the top women in the world. It looks like some others may have clicked the wrong category too, just in the opposite direction.

When it comes to diet and exercise, we often tend to underestimate what we eat and overestimate our exercise and calories burned. I use the database to search for foods that I don't eat often enough to be favorites that I enter myself. How happy I was to find that my name brand snack crackers had NO SODIUM AT ALL! Uh, no. Somebody obviously forgot to enter that line.

It's also easy to overestimate the distance we travel and underestimate the time it takes to cover it. I've done this myself, but the worst example was a colleague who told me she was walking 2 miles a day while at the conference we were attending. I congratulated her for finding the time for that and she replied that it only took 20 minutes. She walked from the hotel to Dunkin Donuts and back. Aside from the irony of her destination, Dunkin Donuts was only ½ mile from the hotel.

According to the US track and field website:

An ordinary person out for a walk averages about 16 minutes per mile or 3.75 miles per hour, a typical treadmill setting. A fitness walker tops out at about 12½ minutes per mile or 4.8 miles per hour." I know that beyond 4.6, I would be jogging not walking.

So, we would expect the recorded times for the SP 5K walk to be between 38 and 50 minutes for the fittest walkers among us and that seems to be true. There are a lot of people in that range, but some have reported covering the course in half that time. I know that it doesn't really matter. It's not like there's an Olympic medal at stake, but it brings up an interesting point.

When studies are done or claims are made using participants' self reported data, how accurate is it, really? Here on SP we are self reporting daily in our trackers and generally getting great results. Sometimes though, the results are not what we expect or want to see. Then it's time to reevaluate. Are we really doing what we said we're doing or have we just done the equivalent of clicking the wrong category – an honest mistake.

In any case, congratulations to all who completed the 5K Challenge regardless of your final time. The challenge is worth it, however we covered the distance or how long it took us. We do it for our health.

Throughout this journey we just have to be honest with ourselves and patient too. There's a solution out there for all of us.

[Add a Blog Entry](#)

See Today's Featured Member Blog Posts

### More Blogs by BROOKLYN\_BORN

[Now I can add one more event to my "Anniversary Dates" to forget - 6/7/2021](#)

[Avoiding Our Wedding Anniversary - 6/4/2021](#)

[Multitasking for Safety – Plus Remembrance and Reflection - 6/1/2021](#)

[Taps Across America – The National Moment of Remembrance - Monday 5/31/21 3PM - 5/30/2021](#)

[View All >](#)

Share This Post With Others

[Report Inappropriate Blog](#)

## Member Comments About This Blog Post



**KANSASROSE67**

This is a great blog and an excellent reminder. It's so easy to estimate incorrectly!  
3143 days ago



**SWEDE\_SU**

honesty in tracking is good, but the truth is in how the numbers add up in reality, and calories in/calories out just don't lie. if weight isn't moving, or is moving the wrong way, there is a reason, no matter how many minutes are added to the fitness tracker, or how few calories.  
3144 days ago



**TINAJANE76**

You're definitely right. A big part of being successful in this process is being honest with yourself. Unless you have a medical issue that's holding back your progress, there's usually a concrete reason why the scale goes up or down. I definitely don't advocate obsessively tracking, but if something isn't working for you then I think it's time to take a long honest look at what you're doing. I try to balance things out by not counting my exercise against my calories unless I'm really going hard core. I know I eat enough calories to support my activity levels, so I view the extra burn I get from exercise as a bonus. That way I know that any extra bites, licks or tastes that I take during the day that aren't tracked will be taken care of. If the scale stops backing up what's been working for me, then I reevaluate.  
3144 days ago



**CD6966999**

Yes, there is definitely a fair share of delusion going on around Spark... I cringe when I see folks hitting 500 fitness minutes by the 3rd of the month. Either they are counting every moment they are not sitting in a chair perfectly still as exercise, or they are spending hours in the gym torturing themselves. Moderation in ALL things, folks - not just food! LOL! Same goes for folks posting about "plateaus" and insisting that they are only eating 1200 calories a day at 200 pounds. Something just doesn't add up, but no one really wants to be told that. Or, what I've seen a lot of lately... "I burn 5000 calories per week in exercise." Really? Even without a single rest day that's over 700 calories a day. Yeah... right.  
3146 days ago



**TREYONE**

Very good blog-gives you something to think about!  
3146 days ago



**DIXIE-LUSH**

nice blog. you are an insightful writer!  
3146 days ago



**DEBBY4576**

Your blog has been something I've noticed and had to let go. I am my own competition. It drives me insane to be two days into the new month and someone has logged 1000 minutes. So for my own sanity, I dismiss the person and their reporting as inaccurate. I so agree with your statement to be honest with myself. I hope most people are just making a mistake. That's sweet of you to hope for that too. It is what it is. And I'm so glad we are "friends" with honesty in common.  
3146 days ago



**JELLIAJAMB**

I have sometimes wondered about the top fitness minutes reported by members, where, by my calculations, those people would be training for 4 hours a day plus. I tell myself, "Oh, it's none of my business anyway, those virtual medals are for our own satisfaction," etc., but the small competitive streak in me does grumble at times. SP and GPS trackers help keep me accountable to the facts of my outdoor exercise, but I know that I have to subtract .5 miles from my treadmill total.

Thanks for this post and previous ones. It was your blog posts and comment on a recent community board that made me think, "Brooklyn\_Born is the kind of person I'd like to know."  
3146 days ago



**CD11824494**

Ha! ANother GREAT post! so very true and I am guilty! again as you have said, honest mistakes for certain... so long as we are being honest! ;)





3146 days ago



### CATMAGNET

This is why I try to keep realistic with my fitness when I track and stay on the low side of ranges for nutrition, so I can at least try to err on the side of conservatism. That way, I have some "wiggle room" if I make a mistake.

Great post! :)  
3146 days ago



### CD13136117

A great blog! Thanks for the research!!  
3146 days ago



### MOOSLADY

I had a conversation like that with my sister. She was telling me how she was in such good shape because she walks 10 miles per day. I asked her how in the world she finds the time since she works all day as a special education aid. She said that her obese mentally impaired student had to walk for 30 minutes on the track at school and she did it in those 30 minutes. I let it go because she is one of those people who is always must be better at everything or have worse problems than anybody (and never their fault, of course). I will grant she is thinner than I am (the beginning of this conversation was how her Dr had told her she was skinny/fat, and had high cholesterol) but walking 20mph, I think not. I am impressed if an average person walks 3.75mph. I have a very short stride and can only walk about 3 without having to jog. I do try to exercise on a measured track at least once a week just so I know I have an accurate distance.

3146 days ago



### WONDERWOMAN

Great blog! I just faced this problem; unable to remember which "race" I had signed up for on SP. I am running a "live" 5K on Saturday so hoped it was the 5K and not 10K, but panicked when I couldn't find a simple way to find it. I ended up scrolling through all the 5K Runners in my gender and age group and found myself, so Whew! But yes, no matter how hard we try, our logging isn't going to be perfect and I agree most often it is because of technical glitches and not trying to cheat.

3146 days ago



### MISCHAKEO

That was interesting. I walk 4 mph and need to use 4.6-8 as a goal. You are right that there is misperceptions on amounts of distance!

Great blog.  
3146 days ago



### MDBUTTERFLY

One of the biggest steps in deciding to lose weight or make changes I think is to approach it with honesty. I think it is something that we need to keep in check often if we are to be successful as it can be easy to slip into lying to ourselves (aware or not) all too easy.

Great blog!  
3146 days ago



### CD12758218

I wonder what the definition of "ordinary" is? At my younger, most fit, I didn't go much faster than 4 mph and most people I knew thought it was alarmingly fast, LOL. Now in my early 50's and with severe arthritis in my knees, the most I can manage is a 3.7 and still I get comments about how fast I walk.

Interesting blog. I do obsess a bit about (track) calories eaten and burned. So often it is guesswork, but eventually it becomes apparent which side you are erring on.  
3146 days ago



### PMRUNNER

Funny. Check out some of the 10k times! There are some folks logging in 10ks in the 28 -35 min range. While I know some folks who run a sub 6 min pace, I would be surprised if these folks were!

Happy running!  
3146 days ago



### WILSONWR

As usual, a great blog. I'll be out at our ranch until next Tuesday, so I'll miss your blogs while I'm gone (no internet). Talk to you then!  
3146 days ago



CD12146214



You are all winners! Congratulations  
3146 days ago



### Add Your Comment to the Blog Post

Leave encouragement, a question, or anything else relevant to this post. All blog comments must abide by SparkPeople's [Community Guidelines](#).

Subscribe to this blog

ADD AN EMOTICON

SPELL CHECK

**Post Comment**

Disclaimer: Weight loss results will vary from person to person. No individual result should be seen as a typical result of following the SparkPeople program.