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Olympians encourage kids to walk

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Former Olympic champion Cathy Freeman of Australia says it's frightening that one in four children are overweight and counts herself lucky to have grown up a healthy and active kid.

Speaking at the launch of the Global Children's Challenge, a programme to tackle obesity, Ms Freeman said she was fortunate to have had an active upbringing and a health conscious mother.

"Mum grew up on an island where she ate a lot of fruit, fresh fish from the ocean and turtles," she told reporters.

"I was brought up with very strict instructions in terms of diet, I was very fortunate."

The Global Children's Challenge will give 50,000 Australian primary school children a pedometer each and allow them to track their progress on a website.

Ms Freeman says the programme will encourage children to walk 15,000 steps a day, which would take just over an hour.

"A quarter of our kids in Australia are obese or overweight and that's really frightening," she said.

"Walking and exercising every day is simply imperative and should be brought into the lives of all of our children in Australia."

Another former Olympic champion Herb Elliott, 72, said he enjoyed walking and aimed for around 10,000 steps a day.

"I spent 40 years jogging to keep fit and two metal hips came



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