

AMERICAN
COUNCIL
ON EXERCISE
PRESENTS

WALK THE TALK!

A FITNESS PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO
DEVELOPING WALKING PROGRAMS



ACE
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE



The American Council on Exercise (ACE), a leading non-profit health and fitness organization, is dedicated to ensuring that individuals have access to well-qualified health and fitness professionals, as well as science-based information and resources on safe and effective physical activity. Ultimately, we want to empower all Americans to be active, establish healthy behaviors and live their most fit lives.

ACE envisions a world in which obesity and other preventable lifestyle diseases are on the decline because people have been understood, educated, empowered, and granted responsibility to be physically active and committed to healthy choices.

We are excited that the Surgeon General used the influence of his position to draw attention to physical inactivity—a critical public health issue—and to create a pathway to change the sedentary culture of this nation through his introduction of *Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action on Walking and Walkable Communities*. ACE strongly supports this emphasis on walking and walkable communities as part of our mission and commitment to fighting the dual epidemics of obesity and inactivity, and creating a culture of health that values and supports physically active lifestyles.

But we know that we can't accomplish our mission alone. Creating a culture of health will require the focus of policymakers, the dedication of fitness professionals, and the commitment of individuals to live sustainable, healthy lifestyles.

This toolkit is a demonstration of our commitment to support the landmark Call to Action. It has been designed to help fitness professionals “Step It Up!” and lead safe and effective walking programs, and become advocates for more walkable communities.

We encourage you to use these resources—to share them and add to them—as you Step It Up! We will continue to promote walking and hope that you will join the conversation with us (#StepItUp) on Twitter (@acefitness), Facebook (facebook.com/ACEfitness), ACEfitness.org or by email at advocacy@ACEfitness.org.



Yours in health,

SCOTT GOUDESUENE
ACE PRESIDENT AND CEO

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THE BENEFITS OF WALKING



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7 BENEFITS OF WALKING

Walking is one of the most accessible forms of exercise, and making time for brief walking breaks throughout a day can provide numerous health benefits. This infographic illustrates the benefits of increasing the amount of time spent walking.



ENERGY LEVEL BOOST

Do caffeinated drinks make you jittery? Skip the calories from energy drinks and take a walking break instead. Going for a walk when tired can increase oxygen flow through your body, while also increasing levels of cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine, the hormones responsible for elevating energy levels. Energy drinks are designed to elevate these hormones through the use of caffeine or other stimulants, but also include unnecessary calories.



ENERGY EXPENDITURE

The body burns approximately 100 calories of energy to walk 1 mile. The body stores excess energy as fat, so increasing your level of physical activity can help reduce your body weight. The faster you walk, the farther you can travel and the more calories you can burn. For example, if you walk for an hour at a 3-mile-per-hour pace you can burn approximately 300 calories. Increasing to 3.5-mile-per-hour pace results in 350 calories burned—an increase of 15 percent.



REDUCES EFFECTS OF SITTING

Excessive sitting can reduce levels of lipoprotein lipase (LPL), an enzyme critical for fat metabolism. Walking can help sustain levels of LPL, which helps metabolize fat into energy.



IMPROVES STRENGTH AND FUNCTION OF THE HEART

The heart is a muscle responsible for pumping blood to working muscles in the body. Low-to-moderate intensity walking is a safe and effective way to strengthen the heart, helping it to become more efficient at moving blood (carrying oxygen and nutrients) to the working muscles.



TRANSPORTATION

Walking can be an effective mode of transportation for running errands or commuting to work. Save money on gas while burning energy by identifying which of your daily or weekly errands can be done by walking. It might be helpful to invest in a large backpack or rolling cart to help you carry items from a trip to the grocery store.



IMPROVES OXYGEN FLOW THROUGH THE BODY

Walking can increase numbers of mitochondria, the portion of the muscle cells which convert oxygen to energy. More mitochondria means that your body becomes more efficient at converting oxygen to energy.



ENHANCES PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

If you are stuck on solving a problem or trying to write an important memo, going for a walk can be an effective way to help you clear your mind. When combined with the increased oxygen flow, you might surprise yourself by identifying the solution by the time you get back to your desk. (Helpful tip: Keep your phone handy so you can record your solution before you forget it.)

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FUN FACTS ABOUT WALKING

ACE prepared a list of fun facts about walking to help motivate individuals to Step It Up! They include statistics, history and some that are just plain fun. For instance, we bet you didn't know that before baseball, competitive walking was America's favorite spectator sport. In the 1870s and 1880s, large crowds would pack arenas like the first Madison Square Garden in New York City to watch—and bet on—men walking around in circles for 600 miles over six days.

In addition, you will find a list of ideas on how you can use the facts in a variety of settings and as a springboard for other ideas. We hope you consider this list as just the beginning of an extensive library of fun walking and physical activity facts, and that you will continue to add to them. We encourage you to think of creative ways to share these facts with friends, family, peers, clients and customers—your whole social network.



52 WALKING FUN FACTS

1. Walking is good medicine: It can help you reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.
2. Dog owners walk significantly more than their non-pooch owning counterparts.
3. A 15-minute walk can curb chocolate and sugar cravings.
4. The fastest 5k (3.1 miles) time for walking is 21:58 (about a 7-minute mile) for a woman and 19:09 (about a 6-minute mile) for a man—faster than most runners!
5. The first Wednesday in April is National Walking Day.
6. Walking can boost creativity by up to 60 percent.
7. People who track their steps take an average of 2,500 more steps each day.
8. Replacing 1½ miles of driving with walking will reduce the amount of greenhouse gases produced by about 75 percent.
9. Walking is good medicine: It can help you improve blood pressure and blood sugar levels.
10. About 2,000 steps equal one mile.
11. A lunchtime walk can make you more productive at work.
12. The risk of exercise-related injuries is 1 to 5 percent for walkers compared to 20 to 70 percent for runners.
13. Taking less than 5,000 steps each day is considered sedentary.
14. Your walking speed can predict how long you'll live.
15. Jobs that get you moving: waiters (23,000 steps a day), nurses (16,000) and retail workers (15,000).
16. Race walking made its Olympic debut in 1908.
17. Walking is good medicine: It can help elevate your mood and enhance mental well-being.
18. Interval walkers lost six times more weight than walkers who maintained a steady pace, according to a Danish study.
19. The claim that you'll burn 100 calories whether you walk or run a mile is false. Your speed and body weight affect the amount of calories you burn. The faster and heavier you are, the more calories you'll burn.
20. Walk to the beat of "Shut Up and Dance" and you'll be going about 3.5 mph. If you can keep up with "Shake It Off," you'll be cruising at more than 5 mph.
21. Walking just 21 minutes a day can cut your risk of heart disease by 30 percent.
22. Focusing on an object ahead of you can increase your speed by as much as 23 percent.
23. Walking is good medicine: It can help you reduce the risk of breast and colon cancer.
24. Walking uphill activates three times more muscle fibers than walking on flat terrain. It also burns up to 60 percent more calories.



25. The ultimate calorie burner: stair climbing. You'll burn calories two to three times faster than walking without an incline.
26. Australians walk the most, taking an average of 9,695 steps each day. Americans stroll the least (5,117 steps each day) of all the industrial countries surveyed.
27. Walking is good medicine: It can help you avoid osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.
28. Being short doesn't have to slow you down: At the 2008 Olympics, 5'2½" Olga Kaniskina of Russia beat out Norway's 5'8" Kjersti Plätzer for the gold in the women's 20k race walk.
29. The longest uninterrupted walk was 19,019 miles from the southern tip of South America to the northern most part of Alaska and took 2,425 days.
30. It would take a person walking nonstop at a 3-mph pace approximately 347 days to walk around the world.
31. A typical pair of athletic shoes will last for approximately 500 miles of walking.
32. Walking is good medicine: It can help you maintain body weight and lower your risk of obesity.
33. Babies typically begin to walk around 12 to 13 months of age, though some may start as early as 9 or 10 months and as late as 15 or 16 months.
34. Walking is the most popular form of exercise in the U.S.
35. Today, less than one out of seven children walk to school. In 1970, two out of three children walked to school.
36. The average walking speed for the typical adult is approximately 3 mph.
37. Eliminating just 10 miles of driving each week would eliminate roughly 500 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.
38. The average person will walk an estimated 65,000 miles in his or her lifetime—the equivalent of three trips around the world.
39. A person needs to walk the length of a football field to burn enough calories to offset eating a single piece of candy-coated chocolate.
40. Adding 150 minutes of brisk walking to your routine each week can add a little over three years to your lifespan.
41. Walking is good medicine: It improves cerebral blood flow and lowers the risk of vascular disease that may help you avoid dementia later in life.
42. You use an estimated 200 muscles during walking.
43. You need to walk roughly 13 miles or the equivalent of a half marathon to burn off a super-sized meal.
44. Walking a typical 18-hole golf course equates to about 12,000 steps.
45. During a typical day of walking, the cumulative impact forces on the feet can total several hundred tons—so invest in good quality footwear.
46. Hippocrates had it right—"walking is man's best medicine."
47. Consider getting a wearable device to track your steps taken or distance covered. Watching your improvement over time can be a great source of motivation.



48. To get a rough estimate of how fast you walk, count the number of steps you take in a minute and divide by 30.
49. Listening to music while walking has been observed to improve mood, motivation and performance.
50. A significant difference between walking and running is the amount of time each foot contacts the ground. During walking, at least one foot is in contact with the ground at any given time, and the length of time the foot is in contact is longer than while running.
51. Since the days of Socrates, walking has been linked to enhanced cognitive functioning and creativity.
52. Thomas Jefferson, who lived to be 83 when life expectancy was 40, walked four miles a day.



IDEAS FOR SHARING

1. Share a “Walking Fact of the Week” on your social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. Use the hashtag #StepItUp.
2. Use Instagram to post a weekly walking photo accompanied by a walking fact. Use the hashtag #StepItUp.
3. Design a bulletin board on walking for your office, place of worship, community center, school, etc. Include multiple fun walking facts or have a dedicated place where you change out the fact on a daily or weekly basis.
4. Print out each fact and hang them at random intervals in the stairways of your office building, community center, school or condominium complex (anywhere that has stairs). Intersperse them with motivational sayings about walking.
5. Ask your local school to engage teachers in an effort to promote walking and, each week, provide a fun fact they can share with their students, perhaps while the students walk in place.
6. Create a partnership with a local mall that encourages mall walking to use the fun facts in signposts placed strategically throughout the mall. Perhaps engage mall tenants to sponsor each post.
7. Work with the local park and recreation department to find a way to distribute fun walking facts along trails or at trailheads.
8. Create a partnership with a local hospital around walking that can include the walking facts in newsletters, signage, bulletin boards, etc.
9. Ask the health blogger at your local newspaper to include a walking fact at least once a week with his or her blog.
10. Ask the health reporter at a local television station to do a segment on walking and then create continuity by broadcasting a fun walking fact of the week.

A printer-friendly PDF is located at ACEfitness.org/WalkingFunFacts allowing you to easily print hard copies for distribution.



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HOW TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT SAFE AND EFFECTIVE WALKING PROGRAMS

TIPS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE WALKING PROGRAM

It takes some thought and planning to develop an effective and successful organized walking program. You wouldn't teach a yoga class the same way as an indoor cycling class. This is true for walking as well. Instructing walking classes or programs poses some unique challenges that need addressing. Here are some tips to help you develop and lead a safe and effective walking program.

SELECT THE RIGHT LOCATION

You can lead walking classes on streets, paths or tracks—remember to get the appropriate permission or permits, if necessary. ACE has developed model guidelines for shared use of public space for activity led by professionals. You can download a copy at [ACEfitness.org/ParkEtiquette](https://www.acefitness.org/ParkEtiquette).

Each venue offers pros and cons. When selecting a location, consider your participants and take practice walks of the areas before making a decision.

STREETS

Choose specific streets and times of day when there will be as little traffic as possible. You will also need to consider foot traffic and vehicular traffic. Business parks may be a good option on weekends, or retail areas early in the morning before stores open. In residential areas, be mindful of the amount of noise you may make. In addition to traffic, consider obstacles such as uneven sidewalks, holes and poles. Concrete or asphalt surfaces are ideal for practicing speed work.

PARK PATHS OR TRAILS

Cars shouldn't be an issue, but you'll need to be aware of and respectful toward other users including walkers, runners and cyclists. Remind your walkers to stay to the right, avoid walking more than two abreast and alert others when passing. Also, be sure to pass on the left. This venue is a good option for larger groups because it allows participants to spread out comfortably and safely.

RUNNING TRACKS

You won't have to worry about traffic, obstacles in your path or keeping the group together—your only concern on a track will be other runners or walkers. Meeting on a track also provides the opportunity to safely introduce drills such as backward walking, sideways walking and strength-training moves. You could even turn your program into a walkers' boot camp. Remember to obtain permission and any appropriate permits for use of the track.

LIMIT YOUR CLASS SIZE

It's tempting to organize large walking groups full of energy and spirit, but when planning an organized walking program, temptation must be balanced with practical concerns relating to safety and your ability to provide proper instruction to each participant. For example, a class with participants of varying fitness levels presents more coaching challenges than a class tailored for a specific demographic group or fitness level. Your location will also influence your class size. For example, it's easier to have larger classes on a track or trail. As you become more experienced, you'll become more comfortable with larger groups. Walking Coach Lee Scott limits her classes to 25 participants, but above 16, she has an assistant coach at the back of the pack when conducting a walking class on public streets.

STRUCTURE YOUR CLASS FOR SUCCESS

Consider your target audience when planning your course curriculum. If your class is designed for young mothers, your structure will likely be significantly different than it might be for a group of seniors, and again different from a group of office workers as a part of a worksite wellness program. Regardless of the audience, it is important to begin with a dynamic warm-up and finish with a cool-down and stretching. In between, high-intensity intervals are an effective way to ensure that participants get a good workout, again based on the target audience. But first include instruction on technique. No matter what type of walking your clients will be doing, technique is critical to getting the most out of a walking workout. With training, your clients will push past the walk/run threshold—the point when it would feel easier to run. Instead of breaking into a run, they will be able to maintain low-impact walking while cranking up their calorie burn, possibly even higher than if they tried to run.

With proper instruction, your class members will be well on their way to achieving the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services of 150 minutes/week of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes/week of vigorous-intensity activity. These guidelines are available at health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/.

PRACTICE SAFE WALKING

Ensure class participants obey traffic signals and use crosswalks. If you are walking in areas without sidewalks, always walk in the opposite direction of the traffic flow so you can see cars coming except when going up a hill or around a curve. In these situations, walk on the opposite side until you can see oncoming cars. If you can't see them, they can't see you. Encourage participants to wear bright colors. If you are walking at dawn or dusk, reflective gear is a must.



MODIFY BY LOOPING

To keep the group together on streets or paths, practice looping. As speedy walkers get ahead, signal all but your slowest walkers to loop. Looping means they turn around and walk to the back of the pack. It works particularly well on intervals. One whistle (if you have a big group) alerts walkers to pick up the pace for their high-intensity interval. Two whistles tell them to slow down and recover. Three whistles signal them to loop back into a group.

HOP ON A BIKE

According to Judy Heller, a trainer for walking groups with the Arthritis Foundation and American Diabetes Association, if you're training groups for distance events like half or full marathons, a bike allows you to check on everyone during long group walks.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A WALKING GROUP



Walking alone certainly can increase physical activity and may have other benefits as well; however, studies have shown that walking in a group offers a wide variety of physical and social benefits. One of the most advantageous parts of a walking group is the instant support system it creates, which helps people stick to a plan of increasing their steps. In the United Kingdom, an organized walking group program titled “Walking for Health” has grown to include 70,000 walkers, 10,000 volunteer walk leaders and offers approximately 3,000 short walks each week around the country.

Organizing a walking group requires some thoughtful planning and preparation, but with these five simple tips, you’ll be well on your way to starting a successful walking group in your community.

GATHER PARTICIPANTS

The first step in forming a walking group is to decide what type of group you would like to create. Are you interested in a small intimate group of already established friends or neighbors, or perhaps a larger one where participants can meet new people? You could invite a few close friends and use the time to catch up on each other's lives and talk through personal struggles. Or, if your goal is to create a larger group, you could put a call out on Facebook or Twitter or email your contact list for interested walkers. You could also recruit people with shared interests such as moms with young kids, retirees or dog owners.



SAME TIME, SAME PLACE

Setting a consistent meeting location, day(s), and time(s) will make your job as the organizer easier. Participants will also be able to block it out on their schedules, which will reduce the likelihood of other activities interfering with the walking group.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

When selecting a location, look for a place that's safe and convenient for participants. Bathrooms somewhere along the route are an added plus for some groups and mandatory for others (i.e., moms with small children, etc.). To avoid any surprises, before selecting a location, scout out the route on the day of the week and time the group is scheduled to walk. It is important to make sure that everyone knows the route before you head out in case someone gets separated.



MANAGE YOUR GROUP

Larger groups require more effort to keep everyone together. Out and back routes work well for large groups. Simply have everyone walk out for half of your designated time (e.g., about 30 minutes if you're doing an hour-long walk) and then turn around and walk back. This will also allow speedier walkers to stroll with slower walkers toward the end. If your route is a loop, try to offer a short cut so there are two options for the length of the walk. You can also "loop people." As the group spreads out, signal the faster walkers to turn around and rejoin the back of the pack. Then, as the faster walkers speed up and gain distance on slower walkers, "loop them" again. A whistle works well for providing looping directions. If you have a large group, it can be helpful to have a volunteer leader in the front, as well as one at the back of the pack. Encourage the sharing of email addresses to form an email list or create a "secret group" on Facebook for the group members to communicate with each other and post announcements.

MINGLE

Encourage walkers to get to know each other by using icebreakers to introduce everyone at the start of a walk. Create contests to see who can talk to the most people during a walk, or list five to 10 interesting facts about the participants, but don't reveal which participant goes with which fact—make it a game for the walkers to figure out who is associated with each fact during the walk. Social interaction is critical because participants who make connections with other group members are more likely to remain as members of the group. Occasionally schedule an informal social event at the conclusion of a walk—perhaps at a coffee shop or a smoothie bar.

THE ROLE OF FITNESS TECHNOLOGY



ACE believes the effective use of consumer-facing health technologies can play a role in reversing the epidemic of physical inactivity. Use of such technology can be particularly effective in promoting programs and strategies to increase walking and help maintain motivation among walking program participants. Here are some examples:

- **Online support communities can be created around social networks such as Twitter and Facebook.**
- **Individually adapted health behavior change programs can be created with accurate and personal data from each person.**
- **Online community-wide wellness programs built around fitness and health technologies can be implemented and managed at a lower overall cost than brick and mortar programs, allowing the programs to be accessed anytime, anyplace, and by anyone.**

The old adage “You can’t improve what you don’t measure” holds especially true with fitness technology and physical activity. Technology allows the tracking and measuring of all sorts of data points like steps, calories, heart rate, blood pressure, and weight, but until these data points are combined in an organized and specific manner, they are limited in their true potential. For example, look at a car, you can see every piece of important information from the dashboard—speed, fuel, RPM, check engine light and many others. Like a car, fitness technology creates a personal dashboard for health from data collected from a wide range of wearable devices and apps, and through this dashboard we can measure and improve health.

With a car, the driver can understand the most basic data, but to maximize performance or efficiency, may seek the expertise of a mechanic. This can also be the case with seeing a health coach or personal trainer; they can take the collected health data and analyze and suggest physical activity based on actual personal data. The analysis of data collected from fitness technology not only benefits the person, but can also benefit the community. Many fitness wearables and fitness apps on the market not only embrace the sense of an online community, but give those on a path of wellness a chance to meet, interact, and exercise in real life. These in-person exchanges can strengthen the virtual bonds often found in the online health and wellness communities. In addition, the collected data from the devices used at these events gives community leaders current and valid data to make better informed decisions that can show a long-term return on investment. Such data can be utilized in arguing for local pedestrian-friendly policies or for funding of more trails and pedestrian enhancements on local streets, etc.

More innovative community leaders can use online community wellness programs that use fitness apps and wearables to challenge other local communities toward increasing the health of the community. For example, the city of Erie, Pennsylvania can challenge similar sized cities in Pennsylvania like Scranton and Harrisburg to take the most steps, drop the most weight or even participate in a combined walk across the state. The same challenges can take place between or within local school districts around sporting events and community spirit getting everyone moving. As highlighted in the Surgeon General’s 2015 Call to Action on Walking, the decision to walk and be more active can be made easier by programs and policies providing opportunities and encouragement for walking and walkability.



TARGETED INTERVENTIONS AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Fitness technology can be used as an effort to keep us motivated to stay on the path of better health. Combining the influence of fitness technology with existing health and wellness strategies from park and recreation facilities, churches, community centers, schools, universities, and worksites can provide leaders with a powerful tool in a quest toward increasing daily and weekly step counts, as well as overall better health.

Though the data collection is simple, the data analysis can be challenging; yet, it is a critical piece of the equation. That is why having a certified health coach or personal trainer available to interpret all pieces of data and then educate, inform, and monitor progress over time can be helpful in achieving and sustaining one's health and wellness goals. The goal isn't to go out tomorrow and run a marathon; the goal is to take small steps on a daily basis that over time will result in a sustainable change in behavior. By monitoring physical activity using technology, these small changes can be tracked, analyzed and improved.

A SOLUTION IN SURVEILLANCE, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

As presented in the Surgeon General's Call to Action, challenges remain in the surveillance, research, and evaluation needed to maximize the success of community approaches and address disparities in walking and walkability. The existing research provides an evidence base of what works to increase walking and overall physical activity in the United States. The addition of fitness and health technologies can improve all three—surveillance, research, and evaluation—and provide insights into the challenges of physical inactivity yet to be studied and understood.

SURVEILLANCE

The promotion and monitoring of physical activity have been a focus of community public health efforts in recent years. However, measuring population-level physical activity is challenging because it requires tracking a large number of people using expensive devices. In addition, recall bias is a considerable issue in phone surveys, as people tend to overestimate their physical activity and underestimate their sedentary time protocols. Emerging health and fitness technologies can provide reliable and valid alternative surveillance tools for self-reported measures of walking and other forms of physical activity. Obtaining physical activity data via social media channels allows for crowdsourced participation, which can provide much more data diversity in terms of greater range of age, geography and ethnicity of users.

RESEARCH

Research in the effective uses of consumer facing health and fitness technologies shows promise in terms of adoption and acceptance. Many Americans rely on health and wellness information from trusted sources on the internet. With the increase in ownership and usage of smartphones, it makes sense to use these devices as a means for health and wellness education, including community wellness programs involving walking and



other physical activity initiatives. Recent research allows for large-scale data collection through consumer-facing health technologies such as mobile fitness apps and wearables and through connected online social networks such as Twitter. Health and fitness professionals and community leaders can establish themselves as credible resources in walking and physical activity by adopting and using health and fitness technologies in their overall strategic planning.

EVALUATION AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Communities across the country are implementing a wide range of interventions that promote physical activity such as walking, but many of these interventions are not being adequately evaluated. The Call to Action will likely result in a significant increase in interest and availability of walking programs that could be uniquely positioned to provide critical data that can help drive policy changes. By incorporating fitness and health technologies early in the intervention process, health and fitness professionals in tandem with communities can not only evaluate both the short- and long-term sustainability of the wellness program, but can also show at a local level the economic benefits of adequate levels of physical activity within their communities.

CONCLUSION

As stated by the Surgeon General, "Walking is an easy and inexpensive way to improve the health and well-being of all Americans. Now is the time to step it up and make walking a national priority." By promoting walking through the use of social media and consumer-facing health and fitness technologies, communities and health and fitness professionals can play a critical role in the effort to Step It Up! To improve walking and walkability in our communities, we must think outside the box of what has already been done and embrace what the advancements of technology can provide to this cause. Although many partners are currently involved, bringing together even more through effective uses of technology will increase the breadth, reach and impact of our collective efforts.



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HOW TO KEEP PARTICIPANTS OF A WALKING PROGRAM MOTIVATED AND ENGAGED

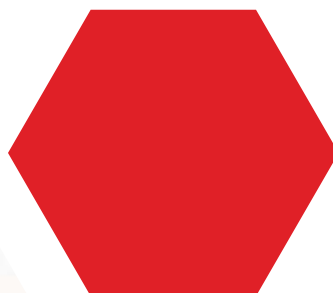
The most important step for the participants of your walking program is the first one—making the commitment to walk and signing up for a program. Now they have committed to walking, part of your job is to provide motivation and support and help them stick with it. Here are five tips to help you keep your participants motivated and engaged.

1. TAP INTO PARTICIPANTS' INTERNAL MOTIVATION

Whether it's walking down the stairs or walking 20 miles, the desire to move more has to come from within. What is it that inspires your participants? Ask them to write it down. It is important for participants to be in tune with their motivations because there will be obstacles along the way that may discourage them from sticking with the program. It is in these challenging times they can draw on their internal motivation to keep them on track.

2. ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO START SMALL

Often when people set out to accomplish goals, specifically those related to fitness and exercise, they have unrealistic expectations. People will go from zero to one hundred miles per hour in one day and then wonder why they can't stick to their plan. We live in a culture of wanting everything right now, but sustainable behavior change habits don't occur immediately. It's important for your walking program participants to understand that their personal goals may take an extended period of time to accomplish. Help your participants work into the program and celebrate their progress. The marathon runner has to start small, with a mile or two. The same principle should be applied when an individual is beginning a new fitness program. If an individual doesn't typically engage in regular physical activity, the individual should start off slow, for example, 10–20 minutes of walking three to four days a week—something manageable. Once the individual is comfortable with this, then he or she can increase the number of days and duration of the activity, ultimately aiming for the 150 minutes/week of moderate intensity activity recommended by the Physical Activity Guidelines. Your walking group participants will be more likely to stick to your program if you start them slow and gradually increase their workload.



3. ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SET SMART GOALS

SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound. Writing out SMART goals is similar to writing out directions to get to a specific location. Here's an example of a SMART goal relative to a walking program: I will walk for 30 minutes, five times each week before work for the next two weeks. Asking your participants to write out a SMART goal at the beginning of your walking program is a great way to empower your participants to hold themselves accountable. Once your participants have written down their goals, ask them to post their goals somewhere visible so they will be reminded daily of their goals.

4. STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF A SUPPORT SYSTEM

When it comes to changing behavior, it's hard to go it alone. The participants of your walking program are more likely to adhere to the program if they have the support of friends, family and/or co-workers. Encourage your participants to ask friends, family members or colleagues to join them in their effort to increase their walking.

5. FOCUS ON THE PROCESS

Establishing an end goal is a great way for your participants to get started in the right direction. But even more importantly is how they engage in the process of achieving the goal. Encourage your participants to be present in the actions they take day in and day out while working toward their goals. Even though your participants may be focused on walking, don't let them overlook the importance of sleep, nutrition, social interaction, and stress management—all play a part in the maintenance and adherence of behavior change. Perhaps the use of a fitness tracker or some type of online engagement would help your participants stay accountable to their goals even after your program ends. Ultimately, it's important for the participants to live one day at a time and make conscious choices that will bring them closer to their goals. When they slip up, they should learn from their mistakes and then let them go.

There you have it, five tips to help you keep your walking program participants motivated and engaged!







IDEAS FOR CREATING WALKING CHALLENGES

Sometimes it takes a little competition to motivate individuals to increase their walking. A walking challenge taps into an individual's competitive spirit to provide that little extra incentive to keep walking. Walking challenges are also a great way to build a network of individuals who can support and encourage each other.

THE TEAM COMPETITION

This one works in a variety of settings: neighborhoods, worksites, faith communities, online communities, and with friends and family. Gather a group of individuals and divide the participants into teams. Ask each participant to contribute a set amount to the prize money (e.g., \$5). Each team then tracks their combined miles for a set period of time (e.g., 6 weeks). The team that has walked the most combined miles at the end of the competition is declared the winner. It's simple and effective! Of course, this type of competition can also be done among individuals, rather than teams, but teams are an effective way to create an encouraging support network for each participant.

THE SCAVENGER HUNT

A neighborhood scavenger hunt can provide a whole afternoon or entire day of active adventure. You can create your own or use a mobile phone application, such as Geocaching.

THE WALKING TOUR

Taking a walking tour is an excellent way to learn something new and get some activity. Create a list of walking tours in your area (e.g., cities, parks, nature preserves) and challenge yourself and others to complete all of the tours within a certain timeframe. Or, create your own walking tours of some of your favorite areas.

THE PEAK CHALLENGE

If you live near a mountain range, you can challenge yourself and others to reach a certain number of mountain peaks in a set period of time. In the Adirondacks, for example, a popular challenge is to reach all 46 peaks of the mountain range.

THE CHARITY WALK

Walk with a larger purpose! Create a walking team to train for and participate in one of the many great charity walks, such as The American Cancer Society Relay For Life. Another option is to download a mobile phone application, such as Charity Miles, that converts your miles into money you can donate to your favorite charity.



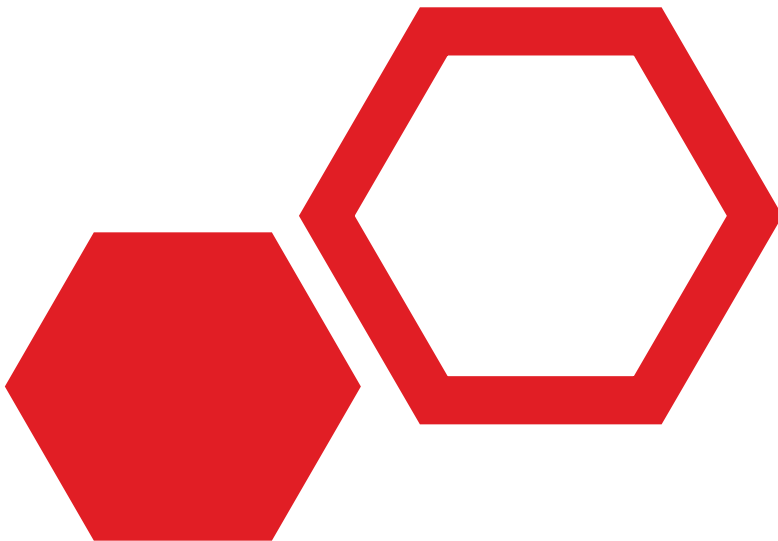


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THE BUSINESS OF WALKING



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DEVELOPING A WALKING PROGRAM

Walking isn't just good medicine; it's good business, too. Approximately 80 percent of the population is either totally sedentary or not active enough to meet the current physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes/week of moderate intensity activity. That's an enormous market in need of the leadership, expertise and motivation provided by a well-qualified fitness professional. In fact, developing a professionally led walking program can be a great opportunity for a health and fitness professional to increase revenue, reach individuals that might be intimidated by traditional fitness offerings, and make a greater impact on the community.

WHY DOES A WALKING PROGRAM MAKE GOOD BUSINESS SENSE?

Below you will find five great reasons why it makes good business sense for you to consider developing a walking program and adding it to your list of available services.

ATTRACT NEW CLIENTS

Walking programs tend to appeal to different markets than those likely to join health clubs or hire personal trainers. Therefore, creating a walking program may introduce you or your facility to individuals you may not attract with a traditional fitness program. Walking programs may be appealing to deconditioned individuals and seniors, but it is important to note that these programs also have widespread appeal to a broader audience. In fact, approximately 55 million Americans walk for exercise, and many of them would likely welcome the opportunity to get more out of their walks. Injured or former runners may also be interested in training for walking events/races like 5ks, 10ks, and half and full marathons. Walking is also a natural fit for anyone who just plain enjoys being outdoors.

INCREASE VALUE FOR EXISTING CLIENTS

Walking plans or group walking classes are a simple and affordable way for clients to stay active between sessions, and with tools like FitBit and MapMyWalk, you can keep tabs on them. For example, Lee Scott, a Toronto-based walking coach and ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructor, has one-on-one clients who also sign up for walking classes to get more supervised workouts at a more affordable price.

EXPAND INTO NEW AREAS

Establishing a walking program may help you connect with corporate clients and the medical community, and expand your business in a new way. For employers, a walking program is a low-cost option in which most employees can participate. Offering a professionally led walking program during lunch or before the work day can be an appreciated new employee benefit. For the medical community, a walking program meets the need for a low-impact exercise available to a variety of levels. It also gives physicians an easy option to refer to patients rather than simply suggest they need to increase their physical activity.

BUILD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Lee Scott has created partnerships with local businesses (i.e., coffee shops, fitness apparel stores and athletic shoe stores) to allow the walking programs she organizes to meet there. "It's a mutually beneficial relationship," she says of the meeting locations, adding that most businesses she approaches are happy to have walkers meet there. She says walkers will spend money at the meeting locations and she'll get referrals from the store. When Judy Heller, a Portland, Oregon-based walking coach and ACE Certified Personal Trainer, launched WoW walking clubs and partnered with a local sporting goods store, her 50-member club was spending almost \$15,000 a year in the store. "Walkers are loyal to those who support walking and show their appreciation by purchasing what might be offered," she said.

STAND OUT FROM YOUR PEERS

If you offer yoga classes or boot camp workouts, you're probably one of dozens or even hundreds in your area offering similar services. Few fitness professionals train walkers or provide walking workouts. Walking can provide you with a unique angle that will not only attract the attention of potential clients, but also the media. The Surgeon General's Call to Action on Walking and Walkability, released in late 2015, has generated a fair amount of media coverage on walking. Contact your local media (print, radio, TV, online) and offer yourself as a fitness expert to discuss walking and how the community can get involved and get started. This can generate brand awareness of your business and gives you an opportunity to share your expertise with the community.

HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

Adding new components to your business can be challenging—one of the most difficult tasks is figuring out how to get started. Your strategy will vary depending on how you plan to use walking. You must ask yourself:

1. Is it your core business?
2. Is it a tool within your fitness business?

HERE ARE SOME KEY QUESTIONS THAT APPLY TO BOTH:

WHO IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

You can generally break up your potential walking audience into two groups: beginner/casual walkers and performance walkers. The first group is usually more interested in building a walking habit, getting into an exercise routine or even socializing. The performance walkers are more about improving their time and completing longer walks. There may be subgroups within each such as seniors, new moms or former athletes such as runners who need lower impact options, but still want a vigorous workout.

WHAT ARE YOU OFFERING?

Consider the types of clients you want to attract and then determine the types of walking that would be of interest. For example, seniors may be more interested in the camaraderie of a walking class that explores scenic trails. (But don't stereotype—an ACE health and fitness professional was beat by a 71-year-old at a half marathon!) For these types of walks, you should market the social aspect, the accountability and fun of being a part of a class, and the formation of a consistent exercise habit. You can usually manage more people for this type of walking class.

Performance-based programs focus more on increasing speed and getting a vigorous workout. Touting benefits like weight loss and more effective workouts in less time are good ways to promote these types of classes.

Where do you find clients? The beauty of walking is that practically everyone can do it so almost anyone is a potential client. But some may be more receptive than others. Here are a few ideas of where you might find fertile ground for recruiting:

- **Seniors/retirees/55+ communities**—many of these even have walking trails that you can use for your classes.
- **Companies**—many are often looking for low-cost ways to improve the health of their employees.
- **Mom groups**—they could even bring strollers.
- **Weight Watchers**—or other weight loss groups in your area—walking is a perfect complement to these types of programs.
- **Local races**—many now include walkers, but even if they don't, runners usually have family members who may be interested in racing if they know that they could walk instead of run.
- **Libraries**—some are looking to expand what they offer. An ACE health and fitness professional is leading walking classes from her library, which is adjacent to a park and trail. In addition, they also offer yoga and indoor cycling classes, so even unlikely venues may be opportunities for walking.

You can offer to do talks on the benefits of walking for groups and businesses in your area as a way of introducing them to walking classes. If possible, take them outside and walk a little, offering one or two tips. After one health and fitness professional's talk on walking, a woman emailed her to thank her for the tips she offered and to say that she was finally able to break 4.0 mph on her treadmill.

WHERE SHOULD WE WALK?

First and foremost, you need to choose a safe location. You will also need to check with local parks and recreation or zoning departments about using some of these venues. Every town is different so make sure you have the proper permission before you start to advertise your program. A good resource around using public lands for your programs is the ACE Model Guidelines for Shared Use of Public Lands for Professionally Led Physical Activity. You can find it at [ACEfitness.org/ParkEtiquette](https://www.acefitness.org/ParkEtiquette).

Here are some good meeting spots to consider:

- Parks
- Tracks
- Trails
- Coffee shops
- Athletic apparel or shoe stores

WHEN SHOULD WE WALK?

Spring is a great time of the year to kick-off a walking program in much of the country. People are ready to get outside, and it gives you more than six months to get them hooked on walking so you can continue right through winter even if you live in an area that gets bad weather. September can also be a good time to start a program across the country. For individuals of every age, back-to-school time always feels like the time to start something new. In areas with milder climates, January will be as ideal as it is for many types of fitness programs. The New Year's Resolution season can be a boom to fitness professionals. Remember it is your job to build motivation and excitement to make sure participants become long-term clients.

The frequency of your class will depend upon the types of walkers you are training. One ACE health and fitness professional finds it is best to offer her general “walking for health and fitness” classes three times a week to help people get into the habit because they are less likely to walk on their own. Her performance-based classes meet weekly because these walkers are more committed and will train on their own between coached sessions.

Your class time will also be dictated by your clients. But first, make sure it works for you. For example, if you have kids you’re chauffeuring to after-school and evening activities, stick to morning or lunchtime sessions to avoid conflicts. If most of your clients work 9–5 jobs, bear that in mind and don’t select a class time in the middle of the day. You may have to test market a few different days and times to find what works best for you and your clients.

You can utilize the 2015 Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities as the hook to not only attract clients, but also to get your local media interested in walking. You can pitch yourself as an expert and suggest stories about walking. This is a great way to promote your classes and services as well as develop a relationship that can be beneficial in the future. You can also use the Call to Action as a way to introduce yourself to companies and offer worksite walking programs. You can download a copy of the Call to Action at surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/walking-and-walkable-communities/call-to-action-walking-and-walkable-communities.pdf.

HOW DO I MAKE MONEY WALKING?

Monetizing walking classes is the same as any other fitness class or session. You can offer a lower fee for larger groups that involve less training. For performance-based classes that involve more technique training and drills, including timed walks, you can charge more, but keep the groups smaller so you can provide the individual attention your clients will need to see the most improvement. You can also do one-on-one sessions and charge a similar fee as personal training. In addition, online programs and remote coaching by phone and computer are other options. You can also build training programs around charity walks or races in your area, especially those with longer distances that would require more training.

Here are two examples of health and fitness professionals with successful businesses that incorporate walking.

LEE SCOTT

A Toronto-based walking coach and ACE Certified Group Fitness Instructor, Lee Scott has built her entire business around walking. Thirteen years ago, she formed WoW Power Walking and now runs 12 to 18 classes (8 to 25 participants in each) a week, year-round. Lee has two primary coaches (fitness professionals with an accredited certification in addition to a WoW Power Walking coach certification) and four support coaches (former class participants who’ve completed walking coach training) working with her.

JUDY HELLER

A competitive race walker and ACE Certified Personal Trainer, Judy Heller has been coaching walkers for about 20 years. Her company, Wonders of Walking, takes a total wellness approach, offering personal training, lifestyle coaching and nutritional counseling—but walking is incorporated into all of it as her go-to cardio option for clients. In addition, she offers walking specific services such as classes on technique, instruction on race walking and Nordic walking (using poles), and training to walk distance events.





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ADVOCATING FOR WALKABLE COMMUNITIES



OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVOCATE FOR WALKING

ADVOCATE:

SOMEONE WHO IDENTIFIES, EMBRACES, AND PROMOTES A CAUSE OR POLICY AND WORKS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT IT.

Advocates work to educate and engage people, including elected leaders and officials, media, and the general public, to spread awareness of an issue and create policy changes that would address it. The Surgeon General's 2015 Call to Action, "Step It Up!", has drawn attention to the effectiveness of walking as a way to combat the physical inactivity epidemic. There is a critical need for advocates to educate policymakers on the importance of safe and accessible walking environments and press them to adopt policies, plans, and programs that will create such environments.

Advocates come from all walks of life; they may be young, old, professional or volunteer. Regardless of their background, they are essential to ensuring that policymakers understand the key issues that impact those they represent. Advocacy may seem intimidating at first. But remember, policymakers work for their constituents. They need to know what's important to the people they represent. In fact, educating a policymaker on walking and walkability is a service to the policymaker.

Although meeting with your congressional leaders in Washington, D.C. is a direct and effective way to advocate for walking initiatives at the federal level, you can find many opportunities outside of our Capitol for you to contribute at the state and local levels. Here are some simple things you can do to make a difference and spread awareness in your community:

EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THE ISSUES IN WHICH YOU FEEL STRONGLY

Find organizations addressing walking and visit their websites, subscribe to their email newsletters, watch webinars, and if they have public events focused on the cause, attend them. Become knowledgeable about relevant walking policies, programs, and issues so you can help educate and engage others.

Get to know your elected leaders at the local, state and national levels. It's easy to find information about your elected leaders by looking for them on most commonly used search engines. Visit their website to find out what platforms they feel strongly about, as it will help to relate walking priorities to these issues. Some elected leaders have specific interest and investment in preventive health, health disparities, or other topics that will easily relate to walking initiatives.

ATTEND TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Participation in these meetings not only allows you an opportunity to share your thoughts, concerns and ideas on walking with your elected leaders, it gives other members of your community an opportunity to also learn about walking initiatives. You might even find a group of interested individuals willing to help advocates for the cause.

SCHEDULE MEETINGS WITH YOUR ELECTED LEADERS

At the national level, visit your Senators and Representatives when they are at home and working in their District Offices. Try to schedule meetings around holidays or congressional recesses. Build relationships with congressional staff who work in your district office. Don't be disappointed if your appointment is with a member of the staff rather than with the elected official. Each of them has a staff of individuals who are experts in different policy areas and they advise the elected official on issues. You might even consider requesting a walking meeting. At the state level, schedule meetings with your local Representatives or Senators in their local offices. Local policymakers such as city councils, park and recreation department boards, etc. should be open and willing to meeting with their constituents as well.

SEND LETTERS, MAKE PHONE CALLS AND CONNECT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Letters, emails, phone calls and social media messages all have an impact. Policymakers want to hear from those who elect them and if they hear from enough of them on a given issue, it can indeed help determine which way they vote.

JOIN IN WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND/OR COALITIONS WHO ADVOCATE

Find organizations already advocating for walking. These organizations may be a good source of information, tools and resources that will increase your effectiveness as an advocate. They may also provide opportunities for you to join their efforts.

WALK THE TALK WHEN IT COMES TO THE CAUSE IN WHICH YOU BELIEVE

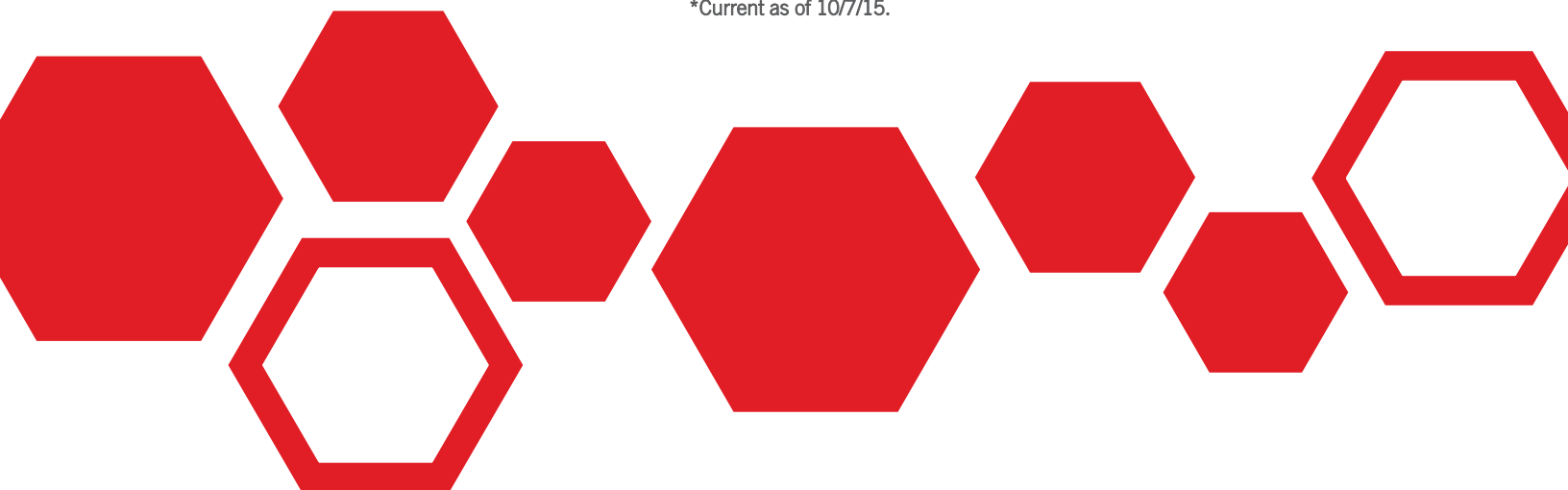
If you want to advocate for creating a more walkable community, start by walking more yourself. Leading as an example not only encourages others to follow in your footsteps, but also allows you to survey the walkability of your community, determine areas in need of improvement and make informed recommendations to policymakers about how to improve the walkability of your community.



FEDERAL LEGISLATION RELATING TO WALKING

BILL NUMBER	BILL TITLE	BILL SUMMARY
HR 2014	Healthy Kids Outdoors Act of 2015*	Would issue one cooperative agreement per state to fund the establishment of a Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy.
H.R.199	Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2015*	Would establish a pilot program to make loans and loan guarantees to eligible entities for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects. Targets at least 25% of funds provided under the Act to be used for projects in low-income communities.
H.R.2071	Safe Streets Act of 2015*	Would require each state to have a law or an explicit policy statement that requires all federally funded transportation projects, with certain exceptions, to accommodate the safety and convenience of all users in accordance “with complete streets principles.” Defines “complete streets principles” as federal, state, local, or regional level transportation laws, policies, or principles, which ensure that the safety and convenience of all users of a transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, children, older individuals, motorists, freight vehicles, and individuals with disabilities, are accommodated in all phases of project planning and development.
H.R.1461	DRIVE Act*	Would repeal the authorization for states to use certain funds for construction of pedestrian walkways. Also eliminates the requirement that statewide transportation plans and statewide transportation improvement programs provide for the development of accessible pedestrian walkways.
H.R.201	Community Parks Revitalization Act*	Would provide funding for the construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians.
H.R.2410	GROW America Act*	Would fund pedestrian projects as part of a comprehensive six-year surface transportation bill.
S.1467	Pedestrian Safety Act of 2015*	Would establish motor vehicle standards to protect pedestrians, pedestrian safety roadway improvements and safety public awareness campaigns in highway safety improvement projects.
S.705	Amends the Transportation Alternatives Program*	Would make several state-friendly changes to the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which is a funding source for a variety of pedestrian projects. The bill also repeals a state’s ability to opt out of the recreational trails program, meaning that funding for such trails is preserved in each state.

*Current as of 10/7/15.





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ADDITIONAL WALKING RESOURCES





When it comes to developing walking programs, you can use anything from different routes, audiences, geographic and weather considerations to motivation tactics. The good news is numerous external resources can help in the facilitation of a walking program targeted to the specific needs of your community or program participants. The following provides a snapshot of a few resources that might aid in the facilitation of a walking program, or help inventory what resources are available in your area.

HIKES AND TRAILS

Interested in taking your walking program to the trails? Several sites, such as trails.com and traillink.com, can help you locate trails in your area and provide details on the trail length, the activity level required to complete the trail, and necessary skill level. The non-profit organization, American Trails, maintains an extensive database of the country's designated National Historic, Scenic and Recreation trails. It can be found at americantrails.org/resources/statetrails/index.html. Mixing up locations and scenery is a way to make walking workouts fun and enjoyable while avoiding monotony.

CALORIE CALCULATORS

Walking is one of the easiest, least intimidating ways to incorporate physical activity into daily life. It is also an effective form of exercise that can help maintain a healthy body weight. One way to keep individuals motivated and aware of the importance of monitoring calorie intake is to calculate calories burned during a walking session. Calorie calculators can be a useful tool you can give walking group participants to use on their own. One such example is can be found at mapmywalk.com/improve/calorie_calculator. ACE has a page of tools and calculators available at ACEfitness.org/calculators.

CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WALK SCORES

“Walkability” has become an increasingly important metric for evaluating the desirability of living in a certain city or neighborhood. “Walk Scores,” which measures the walkability of several regions, is available at walkscore.com. This tool can be useful if you are considering moving and looking for a pedestrian-friendly area or for new neighborhoods to explore while walking.

WALKABILITY CHECKLIST

Wondering what actually makes a community “walkable?” The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center has a downloadable Walkability checklist to evaluate and rate your neighborhood’s walkability. When advocating to local officials for walking-related issues, presenting the officials with a rating system will strengthen your case; you can find one at pedbikeinfo.org/cms/downloads/walkability_checklist.pdf.

WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM GUIDE

Instilling walking as a cornerstone to health in children is a crucial component to ending the obesity epidemic. The National Center for Safe Routes to School offers an online Safe Routes to School Guide for implementing “walking school bus” programs in which groups of children walk to school with one or more supervising adults. The benefits of a “walking school bus” include opportunities for socializing, increased time spent in physical activity and an improved sense of community. The guide is available at saferoutesinfo.org/guide/walking_school_bus/index.cfm.

MALL WALKING PROGRAM GUIDE

Sometimes physical environment factors (e.g., weather, limited daylight hours) or neighborhood environment factors (e.g., sidewalk conditions, traffic safety and crime rates) influence walk-related physical activity. One way to address these issues in the short term, and make sure that all individuals have access to safe and effective walking programs, is to conduct your walking indoors, such as in a mall. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Prevention Research Center, in cooperation with the University of Washington Health Promotion Research Center, put together a downloadable “Mall Walking: A Program Resources Guide” that provides guidance on how to start a mall walking program: cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/mallwalking-guide.pdf.

VOLUNTEER WALKING TEAM

Teams and groups are a great way to keep yourself and others motivated to walk on a regular basis. Create the Good, an AARP initiative, created a toolkit geared toward volunteers looking for easy ideas on how to start walking groups or teams within their community. The toolkit, containing a step-by-step approach to starting a walking group, finding local partners and starting a walking team, can be found at createthegood.org/sites/default/files/how-to/WalkingGroup.pdf.





EVERY BODY WALK! COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTARY

The Every Body Walk! Collaborative (EBW!) is a partnership of national, state and local organizations, federal agencies, businesses, and professional associations committed to developing and implementing collective approaches that can return walking to a valued, cultural norm for all Americans. ACE is a proud member of the EBW! Collaborative. The EBW! is striving to create environments where more people are walking in more walkable places. Several resources, including a walking documentary, can be found on the site everybodywalk.org.

AMERICA WALKS

America Walks are pedestrian advocacy groups devoted to promoting walking and improving conditions for walking in communities throughout the United States. Member groups range from statewide task forces to grassroots neighborhood organizations. Visit their website for tools and resources at americawalks.org.



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**FIT FACTS TO
SHARE WITH
WALKING GROUP
PARTICIPANTS**

A WALK A DAY

The popularity of walking as a fitness activity is growing by leaps and bounds. Low risk and easy to start, walking has proved its health benefits in numerous studies.

A classic eight-year study of 13,000 people conducted at the Institute for Aerobics Research under the direction of Dr. Steven Blair found that those who walked the equivalent of 30 minutes a day had a significantly lower risk of premature death than those who rarely exercised.

A regular walking program can help:

- Reduce blood cholesterol
- Lower blood pressure
- Increase cardiovascular endurance
- Boost bone strength
- Burn calories and keep weight down

GET READY

A walking program is simple to start. All you need are comfortable clothes and shoes. It is a good idea to layer loose clothing, keeping in mind that exercise elevates the body's temperature. Shoes specifically designed for walking are your best option.

Every workout should begin with a brief warm-up and a few simple stretches. Walk around the house or in place for a few minutes to get the blood flowing to the muscles before you attempt to stretch them. Although walking primarily works the major muscles of the legs, don't forget to stretch your back, shoulders and arms. This will help to loosen up any tension you may be carrying and make your walk more enjoyable, as well as more effective.

GET MOVING

Beginning walkers can make their workouts less strenuous by limiting how fast and far they walk. Keep the following in mind:

- Walk short distances—begin with a five-minute stroll and gradually increase your distance.
- Forget about speed—walk at a comfortable pace. Focus on good posture, keeping your head lifted and shoulders relaxed.
- Swing your arms naturally—breathe deeply. If you can't catch your breath, slow down or avoid hills.

Be sure you can talk while walking. If you can't converse, you are walking too fast.

GET FIT

Walking is one fitness activity that allows you numerous options. Once you have reached a point where you can walk a few miles with relative ease, you can start to vary the intensity. Walking hills, in addition to increasing your cardiovascular endurance, is a great way to tone the legs. Concentrate on lengthening your stride or increasing your speed. Don't forget to reward yourself after each workout with a few minutes of relaxing stretches to help prevent sore muscles.

Listening to lively music while you walk is also a great way to energize your workout. But if you wear headphones, keep the volume down and watch out for traffic that you may not hear.

Keep track of your progress. Many experts recommend that you walk a minimum of 30 minutes a day, but there are no hard and fast rules. Fit walking into your schedule whenever you can. That may mean three 10-minute walks each day, or even hour-long walks two to three times a week. The best schedule is one that keeps you walking and keeps you fit.



9 TIPS TO PERFECT YOUR WALKING FORM

Good posture will make it easier to go the distance. Here are some posture pointers for stronger striding during your next walk.

TIP 1: STAND UP TALL

Imagine that a wire attached to the crown of your head is gently pulling you upward. Walking erect will keep you moving at a brisker pace.

TIP 2: KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE HORIZON

This will help you to stand taller and avoid stress on your neck and low back.

TIP 3: LIFT YOUR CHEST AND TIGHTEN YOUR ABS

Using muscles in the front of your body to straighten up will take pressure off your back.

TIP 4: BEND YOUR ARMS

You'll be able to swing your arms faster, which helps increase your speed. It also prevents swelling caused from blood pooling in your hands as you walk longer distances.

TIP 5: RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS

Your arms will swing more freely, and you'll avoid upper back and neck tension.

TIP 6: MAINTAIN A NEUTRAL PELVIS

Don't tuck your tailbone under or overarch your back.

TIP 7: KEEP YOUR FRONT LEG STRAIGHT BUT NOT LOCKED

You'll have a smoother stride and be able to propel yourself forward more easily.

TIP 8: AIM YOUR KNEES AND TOES FORWARD

Proper alignment will reduce your chances of injury.

TIP 9: LAND ON YOUR HEEL

This facilitates the heel-to-toe walking motion that will carry you farther and faster than if your foot slaps down on the ground with each step.

That may seem like a lot to think about, but you don't have to do it all at once. Start from the top of the list and focus on one tip at a time. Pay attention to this area of your body at the beginning of your walk, and then periodically check about every 15 to 20 minutes (don't constantly focus on it) to see if you're maintaining good posture. If not, simply get back in alignment. Do this for about a week and then move onto the next tip. Some changes may happen quickly while others may take some time to become habits.



STEP UP YOUR WALKING ROUTINE

Walking is one of the best forms of exercise as it strengthens bones and gets your heart pumping, and it doesn't require any specialized equipment so you can do it just about anywhere. Taking a walk for 30 minutes, five days a week can help change your body and your life. But if you're a regular walker, you may be looking for ways to pump up your walking workouts. Whether your goal is to get past a weight-loss plateau, boost your energy or simply take your fitness to a new level, here are 10 ways to step up your walking routine.

GRADE IT

One way to increase the intensity of your walk is to add an incline. If you're on a treadmill, it's easy to increase the "grade" or incline by 5, 10 or some treadmills offer even a 15 percent grade increase. If you're outdoors, look for the hills in the neighborhood. Even a steep driveway can provide a change in intensity.

TAKE IT OUTDOORS

Not only can the change of scenery help to beat boredom, ground surface and slight changes in grade while walking outdoors can offer a bit more of a challenge to the body than the consistent surface of a treadmill. To help offset the difference when you're inside, walk with at least a one percent grade or incline on the treadmill to match the intensity.

TEMPO CHANGE

Picking up the pace of your walk can help burn more calories and make your walk more effective. Try walking with at least three different speeds. Walk slowly, then moderately and then briskly for two-minute intervals. You'll find that your breathing rate changes and your calorie burn goes up.

THREE WAYS TO SIDWAYS

Walking is usually done facing forward, but changing the direction to a side step, side shuffle, or side cross over grapevine step can help sculpt your inner and outer thighs, improve balance, and enhance coordination. Try a side step or shuffle for 10 to 15 steps, and then switch to grapevine. Make sure to perform with both sides leading the moves for balanced form.

BACK IT UP

You may need to start this on a treadmill while holding lightly onto the handrails before you take it outside on an uneven surface, but walking backwards completely changes up the muscles utilized in walking. Be sure to know where you're going and start with a slower pace than you would walking forward. This could be best to leave for the end of your walk to provide a bit of a cool-down before stretching.

SKIP IT

Don't skip the walk itself, but do add a hop, skip or a jump to your walking routine. Set a one-minute timer and then perform 10 hops, 10 skips, and 10 two-foot jumps. This helps to increase the intensity of the workout and build single-leg strength—plus it's fun!

MONSTER-SIZE IT

Change up the stride length of your walk by adding lunges or large walking steps between intervals. Think 30 seconds of an easy walk and then 30 seconds of monster-size steps. This can significantly bump up the calorie burn of your regular walk.

WEIGHT IT

Weighted vests can be worn to bump up the intensity of your regular walk. To ensure comfort and safety, opt to wear a vest that is no more than 5 to 10 percent of your bodyweight.

PHONE A FRIEND

Ask someone to go with you on your walk. It can make the time pass quickly or even motivate you to walk a little longer. Plus, it's a great opportunity to connect with those you love while improving your fitness. Dogs also make for great walking partners, so don't leave his tail wagging at home.

WATER WALKING

Walking in shallow water at the beach (weather permitting) or indoors in the pool can add a new challenge to your walking routine, as the resistance of the water makes your movements more challenging, even as the impact on your joints is lessened.



3 WAYS GEAR CAN HELP YOU GET MORE OUT OF YOUR WALKS

These days technology is making our lives easier. From home monitoring devices to calorie counters and health and fitness apps, the tech world is allowing us to make better choices and improve our health. However, many of us are sitting at our desks, still thinking about taking that walk instead of actually doing it. Maybe all you need is an app to help you get started.

If you need some motivation to start putting one foot in front of the other, check out these three ideas to re-energize your walking program and help step it up to the next level.



1. COUNT YOUR STEPS

Pedometers have been around for years and, although you may not see them as a “new” technology, they still offer benefits to walkers. They can provide basic time tracking, step counting, and some even offer incentives for meeting goals, such as providing digital codes you can enter into a computer to redeem for rewards.

The goal should be to walk 10,000 steps each day. If you have not met your goal by the end of the day, get out there and walk some more.

2. TRACK ALL OF YOUR ACTIVITY

Activity trackers are a bit different than pedometers because they don't count the cadence of movement from your hips, but rather from many axes. These devices help track your total-body movements and put them into an output equation for a more complete picture of your daily activity levels; some offer advanced technologies that allow you to upload the data to website so you can see it in journal form or automatically upload it straight to your smart phone.

3. BOOST YOUR BURN WITH EQUIPMENT

You can optimize your walking routine by utilizing equipment to enhance how you move your body to get more bang for your buck in terms of calories burned.

- **Walking poles:** When used while walking, these poles help distribute upper-body weight into your arms and actually can help you burn on average 20 percent more calories than walking without them. Although most people think of these only for hiking, they are great when used on flat surfaces, too.
- **Weighted vests:** Using a weighted vest in your walking program can bump up the intensity of your regular walking, helping you burn more calories without putting undue strain on your wrists or shoulders like hand or ankle weights can. To ensure comfort and safety, opt to wear a vest that is 5–10 percent of your bodyweight.



ANY WAY YOU
STEP OUT IS A
GOOD WAY. JUST
KNOW THAT
WALKING CAN
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HEALTH, ONE
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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