



walk kit

HOW TO START A WALKING PROGRAM: A Guide for Local Program Coordinators

This guide is designed to provide local coordinators with the steps needed to create successful walking groups in communities. It provides basic information and resources that can be adapted to any community.

You can use this guide to:

- Organize walking groups
- Motivate and train groups and organizations to create walking groups
- Advocate for safe and accessible walking routes in your community

Walking is a great way for people of all ages to be physically active. Starting a walking group can help make neighborhoods better places to live by drawing attention to what makes a community walkable, while enabling participants to experience the benefits of physical activity at the same time.



walking groups exist throughout the world to build community, increase physical activity and bring awareness to safety and street design



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KEY SOURCES:

America Walks, the National Coalition of Walking Advocates

Mark Fenton's *Complete Guide to Walking*

Shape News, a project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focused on the obesity crisis

Western Australia Walk Leader Training Manual

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why walk?

It's healthy ^{1,2,3}

Walking...

- Builds aerobic fitness
- Builds strength, energy, and coordination
- Reduces risk of falls and fractures
- Improves mood, relieves depression and stress
- Increases life expectancy
- Decreases the risk of chronic disease

It's economical ^{4,5}

- Walkers bring business to local stores.
- Walkable neighborhoods increase property values.
- Walking is inexpensive and costs less than any other physical activity. (Unless you stop for coffee on your walk!)

It's social ⁶

- Walkers interact with neighbors, contributing to a sense of community.
- Walking establishes independence for older adults due to less reliance on cars.
- People are more likely to continue physical activity or get involved in physical activity if they have social support.

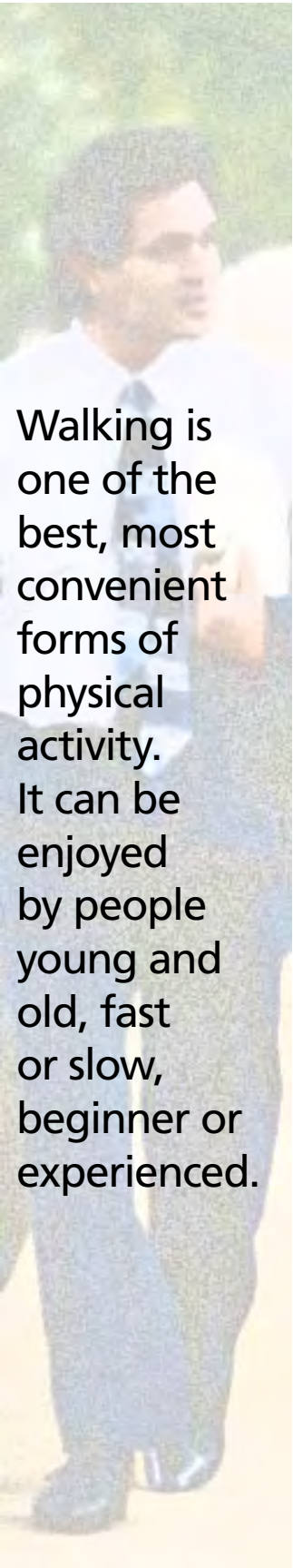
It's good for the environment ⁷

Walking instead of driving reduces:

- Traffic congestion
- Noise
- Air pollution

It's safe ⁸

- Walking reduces opportunities for crime because there are more eyes on the street.
- Walkable communities foster community interaction.



Walking is one of the best, most convenient forms of physical activity. It can be enjoyed by people young and old, fast or slow, beginner or experienced.

Step 1: Organizing a Walking Group

- Before starting a walking program, it is important to locate a neighborhood that has the desire and **capacity** to begin a walking group. Start with a neighborhood where community relationships and liaisons are established in order to increase participation.
- **Community liaisons** are representatives who promote the walking group in their neighborhood and are credible within the community. They assist in identifying the community's needs and involving the community in the process of starting a group.
- **How to find a liaison:** If an existing connection to a liaison does not exist, develop relationships with the community's Neighborhood Association, Parks and Recreation Department, non-profit organizations and advocacy groups. Identify the key players in the community and nurture a relationship with these stakeholders.
- Liaisons will select a location, time and day for walking groups to meet. You can assist liaisons by developing a survey to find out where and when people are interested in walking, and distribute to potential participants. If you lack a liaison, the survey may help you identify one. Once the location is selected, set up an **initial meeting** with your community liaisons to learn the needs of the selected community and make sure they support the health promotion intervention. Be aware of their concerns and how to address them. Let them know that walking groups address more than just physical activity. For instance, if residents are concerned about crime, let them know that walking provides more eyes on the street, therefore reducing opportunities for crime. Additionally, help the liaison select a route (See Attachment 6: Walk Route Planning Checklist).
- If appropriate, work with Faith-Based Organizations to coordinate walk group logistics, such as facilities, refreshments and transportation services. Take care to ensure all walk group participants feel welcome.

walk group ideas

Depending on your community's needs, create a:

Walk to Work Club
a.k.a. Ped Pool (similar to a Carpool), with departmental or company competitions

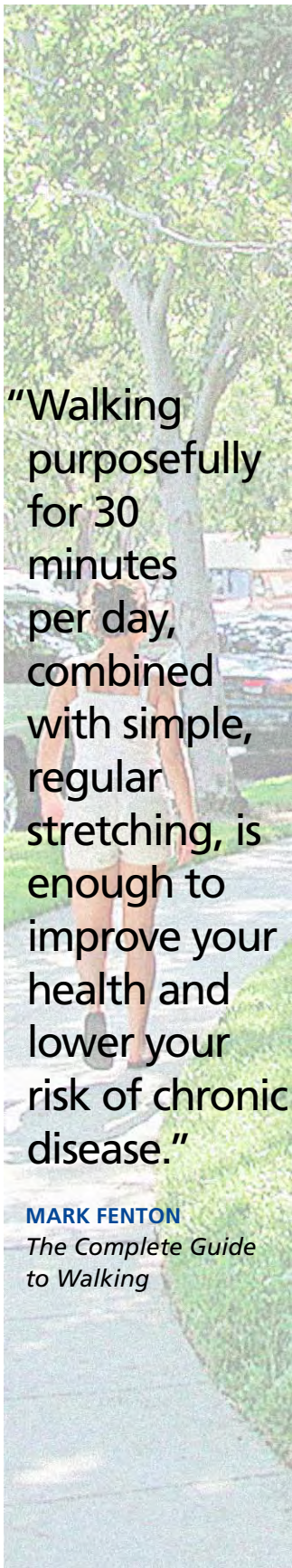
Walk to Transit Club
walking to light rail, bus stops or other public transportation

Walk to Healthy Food Club, walking to Farmer's Markets, Grocery stores, etc.

Kinship Walking Club, encouraging inter-generational walking for grandparents and grandchildren

Mall Walking Club to avoid bad weather, bugs, traffic, sunburn, etc. Malls have readily available restrooms and security officers.

Combine walking with hobbies, such as a **Photo Walk**. Encourage participants to bring cameras and practice photography skills during the walk.



“Walking purposefully for 30 minutes per day, combined with simple, regular stretching, is enough to improve your health and lower your risk of chronic disease.”

MARK FENTON

The Complete Guide to Walking

Step 2: Logistics

With interested stakeholders, consider the following elements when starting a walking group:

TARGET POPULATION:

- Families
- Children
- Older adults
- Disabled persons
- Employees
- Everyone!

ACTIVITIES:

- Neighborhood walks
- Nature hikes
- Educational sessions

NUMBER OF:

- Members
- Walking groups in the community

GOALS:

- Regular exercise
- Socializing
- Advocacy
- Bringing awareness to infrastructure changes (i.e. traffic calming, street design, crosswalks)
- All of the above

TIMING:

- Set a specific, standard time and arrive on time
- Time of day:
 - Older adults = mid-morning
 - Grandparents raising grandchildren (intergenerational walking) = before and after school
 - Working people = evenings or early morning
 - Children = after school
- Avoid conflicting events such as food drop-offs and farmer's markets, unless those events are integrated into the walk
- Ideally participants walk two to three days a week: Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday. Weekends are difficult because of fluctuating schedules.

Selecting a Route: Helpful Hints

- Determine the route with the community liaison, because that person is familiar with the layout and safe areas of the neighborhood.
- Begin with a route no longer than two miles.
- Choose a walk that always starts and culminates in the same place. Loop routes allow people of different fitness levels to walk various distances and find their way back.
- Select a specific, easy to find location.
- Choose a centrally-located site, so people can easily walk to the meeting place to begin their walk (not more than a half-mile from their homes).
- For areas where there are some safety concerns, select a route where it is easy to maintain line of sight between slow and fast walkers if the group gets split up.
- Consult with law enforcement for guidance on safe routes, and also to make them aware of your walk group's activities.
- Consider desirable features such as shelter, restrooms, shade, lighting and seating when selecting a site.
- Provide a base for the walking group to meet before and after the walks, which is important for warm up and cool down exercises and also provides a social opportunity for the walkers. It is important that this base is consistent to encourage regular participation.
- Include historic resources on your walk when feasible.
- If possible, find a walk route that is compliant with the American Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA Act requires that new construction by state and local government follow accessibility guidelines for people with disabilities. For more information, please see the ADA home page: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>
- Be sure the route is neutral (avoid turf issues and exclusive religious locations), safe, embraced by the entire community, and is a place the community feels comfortable visiting.

Walk the route in advance to make sure everything is intact.

For more information, please review the Walk Route Planning Checklist (See Attachment 6: Walk Route Planning Checklist).

Step 3: Promotion

Once the logistics of the walk group are determined, begin recruitment efforts:

Determine a kick-off date and start promoting the walk group six weeks in advance of your kick-off date.

HOW TO CREATE HYPE FOR YOUR WALKING GROUP:

1. Most importantly, **target the residents** directly.
 - a. The most successful, yet time-consuming way is to put a flyer at the door of each residence. An easy way to do effective flyering is to flyer all the houses along the walking route during the scheduled walks.
*Marketing tip: If your goal is to have forty people at the kick-off meeting, target at least ten times as many houses (i.e. 400).
 - b. Depending on your target audience, advertise through the following venues:
 - i. **Workplace:** Employee bulletin boards, employee transportation coordinator, paychecks
 - ii. **Children:** School and PTA newsletters, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA
 - iii. **Seniors:** Senior centers, AARP and Retired Teachers' Association newsletters, doctor's offices, grocery stores
 - iv. **Disabled:** American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), advocacy groups, social services
 - v. **Ethnic groups:** organization newsletters, places of worship, cultural liaisons
 - c. **Word of Mouth** is one of the best forms of program promotion. If walkers enjoy a fun social activity they are bound to tell their friends. Always encourage participants to bring a friend.
2. **Develop promotional materials:** posters, flyers, hand bills, etc. Choose a theme and display it on all printed materials.
 - a. Put up posters in local businesses, local athletic stores, health clubs, schools, parks, medical centers, malls, community centers, churches, senior centers and common walking paths.
 - b. Encourage community members and elected officials to send out flyers.
3. Collaborate with **local health care organizations and hospitals** to advertise the walks. They may be able to provide pedometers and healthy snacks.
4. Make announcements through **email distribution lists**.
5. Advertise at other **walk events**, such as charity or fun walks.
6. **Advertise** in local neighborhood papers, including neighborhood association newsletters.
 - a. Send out press releases (See Attachment 5: Sample Press Release) to the local media: provide basic information about the activity and an item to interest the media, such as a human interest piece about a participant who has overcome barriers to walking.

- b. Press kits can include a press release, background information, walk advocacy resources — including a list of the benefits of walking, photographs and biographies.
 - c. Network with reporters to write an article or publish the walk schedule in the community section (helpful with a limited budget).
7. Work with other agencies that service the area to get the word out, i.e. work with your utility district to get an announcement in monthly utility bills (often free), or with grocery stores to print an announcement on their paper bags.
 8. Utilize public service announcements on the radio or television, and if applicable, cable television listings.
 9. Seek endorsements and proclamations from local leaders or sports figures, i.e. requesting an official proclamation declaring a “Walk and Roll Day.”

FUNDRAISING:

Gaining the support of businesses in the community enables the lead agency to offer entertainment, t-shirts and other giveaways that attract walkers.

- Begin by developing a list of likely businesses to contribute to walk group activities.
- Develop a personal approach for contacting businesses — be prepared with specific details about the event/group and the number of participants expected. Ask for specific items or amounts of money needed.
- Explain the economic benefits of walking, such as increased business in walkable retail areas and reduced health care costs from active living.
- Emphasize that businesses will receive publicity at the event, whether it be through promotional materials or verbal recognition.
- Keep supporters informed, acknowledged and thanked.

Look for opportunities to apply for grants.

DESIGNING A FLYER:

Flyers should include date, time and location of kick-off event.

Additional Information:

- List a contact phone number and email address
- Describe what walkers should look for when they arrive at the starting point (i.e. a person wearing a blue windbreaker or holding a walk group sign)
- List the benefits of walking
- Encourage people to bring a friend
- Tell walkers to wear comfortable clothing and proper walking shoes, and bring water and a hat or visor to protect from the sun
- Make sure flyers indicate that people will be WALKING on the kick off date

SAMPLE FLYER:



Walkability is an important piece of a healthy and vibrant neighborhood. There are things you can do to make your neighborhood a better place to walk! WalkSacramento is sponsoring the following neighborhood walk:

OAK PARK WALKS

SPRING 2006 SCHEDULE

Every Monday and Wednesday at 6:00 pm
Meet at the intersection of Broadway and 35th Street
(outside Starbucks)

WALK DISTANCE

your choice of about 1.5 - 3 miles

WALK TIME

about an hour

Be ready to walk! Wear comfortable walking shoes and loose-fitting clothes. Bring plenty of water.

Walk three times with the group and receive a free WALK T-shirt!

Participate in our health screenings and get a free pedometer and a Health Passport!

For more info: Call _____ at (000) 000-0000

Step 4: Kick-off Walk

Begin with a Kick-off Walk to orient the participants about the walk group.

CIRCULATE SIGN-IN SHEET:

Include:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone
- Email
- Times available to walk

Ask participants if they're willing to allow the walk leader to put their contact information on a walk group roster. The roster will be distributed to the entire group to organize additional walks, check in on a fellow walker if they have been absent, or facilitate socialization among members.

GROUP INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS:

At the Kick off Walk, discuss the following details during stretching, or provide the information in a hand-out:

- Ask participants why they came out to walk, which will help set the stage to quickly establish bonds between participants. Building bonds between members is essential to a successful walking group.
- Emphasize that it is their community's walk and they have ownership of the walk group.
- Clarify that lead staff is there to support them, and is open to their suggestions. For example, if they choose as a group to alter the route or change walk times they may do so. If the group changes the time or place, they should contact lead staff so promotional information provided about the walk is accurate.
- Explain that because everybody begins at a different fitness level people should walk at their own pace. If the distance is too great at anytime, walkers should turn around and walk back when they need to. Participants are not expected to complete the whole route the first time they go out — it's not a race.
- Walkers need to be hydrated and wear proper sunscreen. Bring a water bottle, and a hat or visor to protect from the sun.
- Encourage participants to think about how they want to handle people who want to walk with their dogs.
- Let participants know that you recommend they show up for scheduled walks, but if they miss a walk they can rejoin the group at any time.
- Encourage participants to stretch after each walk. Provide stretching demonstrations until group feels comfortable doing stretches on their own. Provide stretch guide (See Attachment 2: Stretching Routine).
- Make it clear that the walk is consistent, even with weather changes and daylight savings time.



- Let walkers know that from time to time they will be given incentive items such as water bottles, t-shirts, sun visors and whistles to sustain their motivation. Wait at least three weeks to distribute, until interest is gauged, and dole out different incentives every three months.
- Walkers should consult with their doctor before walking if they have heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, smoke, are obese, or have other chronic diseases.
- Liability release (See Attachment 4: Sample Release Form): alert participants that they are responsible for determining any special conditions or health problems. Waivers shift liability to the individual. For events, make sure you have the appropriate liability insurance.

LOGISTICS:

- Explain where and when participants will be meeting.
- Provide maps of the walking route, identifying any key landmarks, toilets, rest spots, water fountains, etc. Include meeting point, day, start and finish times.
- Always have someone who is trained in first aid on the walk.
- After the walk, tell participants to wait at their starting area even if they finish early because they will be led through a cool down stretching routine.

WHAT IF IT RAINS?

- Option A: During inclement weather, let walkers know you'll provide other incentives to help them with their exercise adherence, such as mileage challenges or goal-setting.
- Option B: If it's raining, carry on as normal, but be prepared with ponchos and umbrellas.
- Option C: Establish a back-up rain location. Try a community center auditorium or a local mall. Some open before regular store hours so people can walk.

WHAT TO GIVE WALKERS:

In addition to the orientation talk, provide walkers with a packet after the walk that includes the following:

- Benefits of walking
- Walkability Checklist (See Attachment 1: Walkability Checklist)
- Stretching routine (See Attachment 2: Stretching Routine)
- Supplemental activities to support the walk group: List of additional physical activity venues including exercise and dance classes, aqua aerobics, etc.
- At a future meeting distribute the walk group contact list.

AFTER THE ORIENTATION, START WALKING!

- The organizing agency leads the first walk.
- Encourage participants to:
 - Walk at a comfortable pace and remind them that it's not a competition.
 - Drink plenty of water before, during and after walking, especially in summer.
 - Have fun and meet new people.
- Communication between front and back: Mobile phones can be very useful. Some walk leaders use walkie-talkie radios, but an easy option is the whistle. Work out your own whistle code — one long blast for stop, two shorter blasts for go, repeated blasts for emergencies.

AFTER THE WALK:

- End the walk with a brief sharing of what was enjoyable and what could be improved on the walk route.
- Lead stretching exercises.
- Distribute packets.
- Encourage everyone to bring a friend or an acquaintance to the next meeting.
- Follow-up with new members before the next meeting. Get them involved.
- Inform participants that if they're interested in making environmental changes in their community, they can fill out an initial Walkability Checklist (See Attachment 1: Walkability Checklist) to determine the barriers to walking in their neighborhood.

SUBSEQUENT WALKS:

- Set aside a special day to conduct a Walkability Audit, which is an evaluation on foot about how to make a particular route more pedestrian-friendly. Use Walkability Checklists to identify areas along the walk which need improvement (See Attachment 1: Walkability Checklist). Make an extra effort to involve participants who may want a more walkable neighborhood, but who aren't necessarily part of the walking group.
- Filling out the walkability checklist helps to build advocates.
- Collect Walkability Checklists at the end of the walk. The lead agency should manage the data collected from the walk audit. To utilize the results from the checklists, please see Section 2: Building Advocacy.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

- Blend structure (established meeting place and time) with informal leadership (i.e. rotating walk leaders selected from the community)
- Community-led groups are often self-sustaining.
- Have at least one staff member present for the first few walks to build momentum, and then lessen staff involvement when a naturally occurring walk leader from the group arises.

Walking Tips:

- Wear suitable clothing and shoes. Dress comfortably.

In warm weather, wear loose cotton or natural fiber clothes. Wear sunscreen, a hat and a light color long-sleeve shirt to help protect from the sun.

Cotton and natural fibers work well in summer and winter — they absorb moisture in the summer to keep you cool and retain your body's heat to keep you warm in the winter.

In cold weather, wear layers: wear a t-shirt under a long-sleeve top with a sweater or sweatshirt on top so you can stay warmer, and remove layers as your body begins to warm up.

Comfortable, sturdy, light-weight walking shoes are the most important piece of equipment needed. Choose shoes that do not give blisters and give good support.

- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Prevent dehydration by drinking water before, during and after the walk.
- Warm up by beginning your walk slowly. Practice proper breathing by breathing deeply and evenly, establishing a comfortable rhythm as you walk. You can also practice easy side bends, heel walks, half lunges, arm and foot circles to warm up.
- Walk at an enjoyable pace that you can continue for at least thirty minutes, with an intensity that makes you breathe a little faster, feel warmer, have a slightly faster heart beat, but still allows you to have a conversation, but not sing.

TAKE THE TALK TEST: If you are out of breath to the point where you cannot talk, you are working too hard. If you are walking and can sing, you are not walking hard enough for fitness. Pick up the pace or pump your arms.

- Be aware of signs of overexertion, including dizziness, soreness, pain in muscles, irregular heart beat, nausea, chest pains, low abdominal pains, lack of coordination, etc. If you feel tired or sick, slow down and stop walking if necessary.
- Practice proper posture by aligning your head with your back. Keep your back straight, arms loose, elbows bent slightly, and abdomen tucked in.
- Find a comfortable stride.

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR STRIDE LENGTH:⁹

1. Walk a measured distance (i.e. 10 ft.)
2. Count the number of strides taken (i.e. 5 steps)
3. Divide by the number of steps taken to arrive at individual stride length

Example: $10 / 5 = 2$ ft. stride length

- Your target heart rate, from 65 to 85 percent of the maximum your heart can beat, should be your goal 3 to 5 times a week for 30 to 60 minutes to maximize the health benefits of cardiovascular activity.

CALCULATE YOUR TARGET HEART RATE:¹⁰

1. Subtract your age from 220 to find out your maximum heart rate, so if a person is 45 years old then maximum heart rate: $220 - 45 = 175$ beats per minute.
2. Lower Range: Multiply your maximum heart rate by 65%: $175 \times 65\% = 114$ beats per minute 114 beats per minute will be the lower range of the zone.
3. Higher Range: Now multiply your maximum heart rate by 85%: $175 \times 85\% = 149$ beats per minute

The target heart rate in this example is 114 - 149.

- Pace — when you reach a brisk pace, take your pulse. When you reach your target zone, maintain that pace for thirty minutes.
- Stretch — five to ten minutes of easy stretching before and after your walk will help you stay injury-free and get the maximum benefit from your physical activity. For older adults, it is recommended to stretch after the walk as older muscles will be more warmed up for stretching.

Safety Tips for Walkers:

1. Always walk on designated sidewalks and paths. If there is no sidewalk and you have to walk in the road, always walk FACING traffic, so you can see any car that might go out of control.
2. Tips for Crossing the Street.
 - Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks.
 - Stop at the curb, or the edge of the road.
 - Stop and look left, then right, then left again, before you step into the street.
 - If you see a car, wait until it goes by. Then look left, right and left again until no cars are coming.
 - If a car is parked where you are crossing, make sure there is no driver in the car. Then go to the edge of the car and look left-right-left until no cars are coming. Keep looking for cars while you are crossing, and remember, walk. Don't run.
3. Dress to be seen. Brightly colored clothing makes it easier for drivers to see you during the daytime. At night, you need to wear special reflective material on your shoes, cap or jacket to reflect the headlights of cars coming towards you.
4. Be prepared in the event of an emergency with emergency phone numbers.
5. Know the exact route.
6. In some neighborhoods, dangerous animals can be a barrier to walking. Develop a relationship with Animal Control and carry their number on walks. Invite them to speak to your group about how to deal with stray dogs. Additionally, contact a government representative to help check the route in advance of key walk group events.

choosing the right walking shoe

When choosing walking shoes, check for:

- Appropriate arch supports that are high enough to support the arches of your foot.
- A firm heel that is slightly raised and holds your foot well for stability.
- Enough sole to cushion your steps. Look for shoes with a tough outer layer of rubber and a soft mid-sole that runs the full length of the sole.
- The entire shoe should be designed to absorb shock.
- Your toes should be able to spread freely and not feel squashed or tight. Socks help prevent blisters, especially cotton or a cotton/acrylic blend. Natural fiber socks, such as cotton or wool, allow for air circulation.
- Tip: To avoid blistering, rub feet and toes with Vaseline before putting on socks and shoes.

Step 5: Sustainability

GROUP ATTRITION AND EXPANSION:

Walking groups are very dynamic — a group can start with forty walkers and dwindle at any given time to ten consistent walkers. Most groups end up gelling with ten to eighteen walkers. Often walkers find someone at their



fitness level and pair off and walk together. Also, not everyone who walks in the neighborhood will want to do so with a group. Some people like to walk alone or on their own schedule, but you can still involve these people in special events. Fluctuations occur, but it is the group's responsibility, as well as the lead staff's to continuously promote the walking group. One way to maintain enthusiasm is to provide incentives such as t-shirts. Also, provide members with flyers to pass out to neighbors to encourage them to join the group.

MAINTAINING MOTIVATION:

Recognition in the community is important for motivation. Ways to motivate walk groups and give recognition to their efforts include:

- Media stories. They provide positive feedback for participants.
- Newsletters highlighting walk groups, including testimonials from walkers and an activities calendar.
- Walking groups need to feel support from organizations within the community in which they walk. For example, groups that walk outdoors need to have support from local government to ensure footpaths and walkways are well maintained. Some local governments have provided subsidies for walk group members to participate in various activities, such as classes at the local pool.

ON THE WALK:

- Offer prizes and raffles after the walk. Award prizes for members who bring new participants.
- Include celebrity, political or sports figures on walks.
- Teach participants how to find their target heart rate and monitor it weekly.
- Have participants keep a personal walking log (See Attachment 3: Sample Walk Log and Walk Journal), encouraging them to be creative in recording “walking adventures” and sharing them on group walks.
- Have lead staff provide incentives such as pedometers.
- Organize mileage challenges.
- **ROCKIN' THE WALK:** Consider playing some fun walking music with a stereo at your kick-off event or during stretching routines (Note: It is not recommended to use headphones while walking).

WALKING SONG IDEAS:

Walkin on Sunshine: Katrina and the Waves

I'm Walking: Fats Dominoe

Walk this Way: Aerosmith

Do the Bus Stop: Fatback Band

I Don't Need Your Rocking Chair: George Jones

Walking in LA: Missing Persons

These Boots are Made for Walking: Nancy Sinatra

Walking After Midnight: Patsy Cline

I Want to Ride my Bicycle: Queen

You Gotta Walk Don't Look Back: Peter Tosh and Mick Jagger

I Would Walk 500 Miles: the Proclaimers

- If appropriate, develop roles among the group, such as:
 - Team leader to coordinate group activities
 - Stretch leader
 - Activities and promotion leaders for each activity planned

INCENTIVES:

- T-shirts make an excellent first incentive item to give out. They provide a sense of belonging, especially if a group name is selected, and they promote the walking group to neighbors.
 - Create a group name to include on t-shirts and flyers, in order to foster group unity.
 - As a larger group, wear t-shirts when participating in charity walks.
- Create a “Frequent Steppers” program similar to collecting airline miles, where walkers receive discounts to local shops if they walk a certain number of miles.
- Give out motivational posters and brochures relating to walking. Visit the Journeyworks Publishing website for ideas: <http://www.journeyworks.com/default.asp>

- Create a pocket guide to walking, highlighting walking routes in and around the community.
- Create a Community Walk-Bike Event Calendar.

ON THE WALK GIVE-A-WAYS:

- Water bottles
- Visors
- Lip Balm
- Sunscreen
- Key chain with a whistle
- Pedometers (See Attachment 8: Pedometer Information from Mark Fenton)

pedometers in focus:

Advantages include:

- Immediate feedback
- Increases self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation
- Coaching and self-monitoring tool (goal setting)
- No language barrier; objective numerical measurements
- Socially acceptable, inexpensive, easy to use

PEDOMETER LIMITATIONS:

- Does not measure intensity (how hard), duration (how long), or frequency (how often)
- Can not distinguish between walking and running
- Inaccurate for people who have excessive abdominal fat
- Can not measure static movements (stretching), upper body exercises, water sports or bicycling

WHERE TO GET A PEDOMETER:

Pedometers¹¹ can be found in many sporting goods stores or directly from manufacturers. They can be digital or analog. For direct sales or for bulk pricing, some examples include:

New Lifestyles: www.digiwalker.com

Optimal Health Products: www.optimalhealthproducts.com

Accusplit: www.accusplit.com

Blue Cross/Blue Shield (for bulk purchases):

<http://www.bcbs.com/walkingworks/crossshield.html>

SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES:

- Create a 10,000 steps-a-day challenge, rewarding participants who reach their step goal at least five times a week (See Attachment 8: Pedometer Information from Mark Fenton).
- Assist in hosting a charity walk/run. Partner with other walk groups for special events.
- Organize walking and bicycling tours. Encourage walking functions including weekend excursions, walks in the city, country walks, trekking through the zoo and mall walking.
- Visit another walk group and walk their route to build social networks.
- Set up mileage challenges with other walk groups. Mileage challenges — both individual and group competitions — can be used in the winter to sustain interest.
- Organize a peer mentoring program.
- Organize quarterly social functions such as barbeques, picnics and breakfast after morning walks.
- Offer a lecture series on various health issues that meets every six weeks.
- Develop a curriculum component (i.e. ornithology).
- Support the opening of a new public transportation station, line or corridor.
- Clean up a hiking trail or walking path.
- Launch a farmer's market.
- Depending on staff time, make contact through mail every six to eight weeks with supplemental materials: how to lower blood pressure, a newsletter, etc. Follow-up provides a sense of belonging to the group.

STAFF ROLE:

- Ensure available and committed staff, and enlist volunteers to help plan, coordinate and evaluate walk group activities. Before starting, ensure you have the staff time and dedication necessary to create a consistent and sustainable walk group.
- Walking group participants look to the walk leaders for guidance and encouragement. To sustain the walking group, the walk leaders should attempt to create a positive, trusting and caring atmosphere within the group
- A good walk leader:
 - Is friendly and enthusiastic.
 - Makes the walk feel like a fun social occasion.
 - Is reliable and punctual.
 - Is cognizant of people's health.
 - Knows basic first aid procedures.
 - Is familiar with the route (and alternatives).
 - Informs the relevant staff immediately if any changes or problems occur.
 - Incorporates health information as appropriate.
 - Smiles!

sample testimonial

“What have you gotten out of this walking program? How has it changed your life?”

“I feel a lot better. I’m healthier. I don’t have the severe knee pains that I used to have. Before it was difficult to sleep at night because my knees would hurt quite a lot. Not anymore! I feel like there are days where I have so much energy that I can’t stop. I go home. I clean house. I go shopping all day. I really feel good! I’ve met some fantastic people and we’ve become close friends. We call each other if we miss a couple of days and sometimes enjoy breakfasts together. I’m so glad this group is together because if it wasn’t I know I wouldn’t be walking. It is so beneficial to me, it motivates me to keep going and I just really look forward to it.”

Rachel Salca,
Garcia Bend
Walking Group

Step 6: Evaluation

TYPES OF EVALUATION:¹²

- **Outcome evaluation** assesses program goals to determine if changes to behavior, attitude, or knowledge have been achieved through the intervention.
- **Process evaluation** measure actions taken in pursuit of program outcomes, such as the number of ads shown in a campaign, or the number of community partners.

HOW TO EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF A WALK GROUP:

- Record how many walkers sign up as official participants and attend regularly. Attendance counts show the increase (or decrease) in walkers.
- Collect Walkability Checklists (See Attachment 1: Walkability Checklist) and chart environmental and/or policy changes made to the walk route and neighborhood once the group has started.
- Conduct “satisfaction” surveys for lead staff, members, and participants
 - Number and description of outreach activities, meetings, classes, participants
 - Demographics of participants
- Distribute a Neighborhood Questionnaire (See Attachment 7: Sample Evaluation)
- Conduct Pre-post functional fitness assessments, measuring:
 - Muscle strength and endurance
 - Aerobic endurance
 - Range of motion
 - Balance, gait, mobility
 - Fear of falling
 - Other individual data to be measured by a licensed clinician may include: blood pressure, height and weight, cholesterol, bone density, vision, hearing, etc.
- Collect testimonials

resources

Links:

The following are some suggested links to help start a walking group.

- The Shape We're In: www.shapenews.com
This Community Action Guide provides specific tools for working with the media, including news release templates, instructions on how to connect with local radio and TV outlets, how to pitch local stories and how to write an opinion-editorial (op-ed). The guide also shows how to create a 10,000 steps per day program, details about creating a walking school bus and more!
- *The Complete Guide to Walking for health, weight loss, and fitness* by Mark Fenton
The book includes information about walking warm-up moves (p. 8–9), apparel, clubs and walking organizations, events, athletic footwear, hiking organizations, mall walking, walking poles and socks.
- Western Australia Department of Park and Recreation Walk Leader Training Manual
The manual includes information about the role of the walk leader, stretches, first aid and more: http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/programs/walking/walk_leader/manual.asp
- The Complete Mall Walker's Handbook: Walking for Fun and Fitness by John H. Bland, M.D., and Jenna Colby

TARGET POPULATION: CHILDREN

- International Walk to School Day: www.iwalktoschool.org
- National Walk to School Day: www.walktoschool-usa.org
- California Walk to School Day: www.cawalktoschool.com
- Walk and Bike Across America: a web-based interactive game that promotes physical activity. Learn about America while increasing the health of students and decreasing the traffic around schools: <http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/walk/>
- National SAFE KIDS Campaign: www.safekids.org

TARGET POPULATION: OLDER ADULTS

- From the Field: Four Communities Implement Active Aging Programs: http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/CCFAA_case_studies.pdf

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS — ORGANIZATION LINKS:

Pedestrian Advocacy Organizations:

- [America WALKs](http://www.americawalks.org) (www.americawalks.org): Association of pedestrian activist groups in the USA.
- [California Walks](http://www.californiawalks.org) (www.californiawalks.org): California Walks is a coalition of nonprofit pedestrian advocacy groups promoting walkable communities for all people throughout California.
- [Living Streets](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk) (www.livingstreets.org.uk): Living Streets, formerly called the Pedestrians Association, works in the United Kingdom to improve the quality of streets and public spaces that people on foot can use and enjoy.
- [Partnership for a Walkable America](http://www.walkableamerica.org) (www.walkableamerica.org)

Local examples:

- [WalkBoston](http://www.walkboston.org/) (<http://www.walkboston.org/>): Promotes walking for transportation and recreation.
- [Walk San Francisco](http://www.walksf.org) (www.walksf.org): Walk San Francisco is a member based pedestrian advocacy organization that wants to make San Francisco a more livable and walkable city.
- [WALK Austin](http://www.io.com/~snm/walk/index.html) (<http://www.io.com/~snm/walk/index.html>): Austin, Texas group organizes citizen support for increased use and safety of pedestrian facilities.
- [WalkSacramento](http://www.walksacramento.org/) (<http://www.walksacramento.org/>): Dedicated to achieving safe, walkable communities.
- [WalkSanDiego](http://www.walksandiego.org) (<http://www.walksandiego.org>): A grassroots non-profit organization to promote walkable communities and the pedestrian environment in the San Diego area.

Additional organizations:

- **Active Living Programs** (www.activeliving.org):
 - Active Living by Design increases physical activity through community design: www.activelivingbydesign.org
 - Active Living Leadership works with government leaders to create and promote active communities: www.activelivingleadership.org
 - Active Living Research investigates policies and environments to support active communities: www.activelivingresearch.org
 - Active Living Resource Center provides technical assistance to create active communities: www.activelivingresources.org
 - Active Living Blueprint develops strategies to increase physical activity among adults age 50 and older: www.agingblueprint.org
- National Center for Bicycling and Walking: <http://www.bikewalk.org/>
- Walkable Communities, Inc. (<http://www.walkable.org/>): A non-profit corporation organized to help communities become more walkable and pedestrian-friendly.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/index.htm, www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm

- Local Government Commission: www.lgc.org
- California Bicycle Coalition: www.calbike.org/
- Rails to trails Conservancy: www.railtrails.org
- Center for Civic Partnerships: www.civicpartnerships.org
- Prevention Institute: www.preventioninstitute.org
- California 5 a Day for Better Health Campaign: www.ca5aday.com
- Institute of Transportation Engineers: www.ite.org
- Surface Transportation Policy Project: www.transact.org
- California Diabetes Program: The **Diabetes Information Resource Center (DIRC)** is an easy-to-use portal that helps organizations exchange information and tools to support their work to prevent or control diabetes and other chronic diseases: <http://www.caldiabetes.org/>
- American Association of Retired People: www.aarp.org
- California Department of Transportation: www.dot.ca.gov
- California Park and Recreation Society: www.cprs.org
- Odyssey: www.odyssey.org
- 50 Plus Lifelong Fitness Association: www.50plus.org

ADVOCACY RESOURCES:

- Walkable Streets: A Toolkit for Oakland:
<http://www.urbanecology.org/walkable.htm>
- Guide to Community Preventive Services – Physical Activity (CDC):
<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/>
The Community Guide systematically reviews the effectiveness of selected population based interventions designed to increase levels of physical activity focused on information approaches, behavioral and social approaches and environmental and policy changes.
- Safe Routes to Healthy Foods Toolkit (Odyssey):
<http://www.odyssey.org/toolkit/>
Use these tools to find your role in planning and advocating for active, healthy, walkable and socially and economically just communities.
- A Toolkit on Land Use and Health: General Plans and Zoning (Public Health Institute): www.healthyplanning.org
This toolkit is designed for nutrition and other public health advocates who are seeking a fundamental, introductory understanding of how land use decisions are made and how advocates can effectively participate in those decisions.
- Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health, 1996:
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/sgr.htm>
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC):
www.pedbikeinfo.org; www.walkinginfo.org
- Federal Highway Administration Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Research Program: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm



- Accessible Sidewalks, US Access Board: www.access-board.gov
- Shape Up America! www.shapeup.org
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Traffic Safety Programs: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/ped
- Improving Pedestrian Access to Transit: An Advocacy Handbook. Prepared by WalkBoston, with assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. Sponsored by Federal Transit Administration, Livable Communities Program, 1998.

The handbook relies heavily on case studies from Boston's urban core area, but presents lots of valuable information and uses a very lively, user-friendly format and style. To order, fax your name and address to Effie S. Stallsmith, FTA Office of Planning, at (202) 493-2478. (Report No. FTA-MA-80-X008)
- Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide. Developed by the AARP Public Policy Institute to help residents, advocates, and local leaders identify areas of success and potential opportunities for improvement in their community: http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311_communities.pdf
- Active Living and Social Equity: Creating Healthy Communities for All Residents: <http://icma.org/activeliving>

calendar

Coordinating your walk group efforts with national events can help increase awareness and motivation. Check the websites for events in your area, or start an event in your area!

MAY

National Bike Month: <http://www.bikemonth.com/>

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month:
www.fitness.gov/may_month_observances.html

National Walk to Lunch Day: www.americawalks.org/walktolunch/index.htm

World Walking Day: www.ivv.org/englishweltwandertag.htm

National Running and Fitness Week: <http://www.americanrunning.org/>

National Bike to Work Day: www.bikeleague.org/educenter/bikemonth.htm

National Senior Health and Fitness Day:
www.fitnessday.com/senior/index.htm

National Employee Health and Fitness Day:
www.physicalfitness.org/nehf.html

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, World Asthma Day:
<http://www.aafa.org/index.cfm>

Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month:
<http://www.nof.org/>

Stroke Awareness Month:
<http://www.americanheart.org>

JUNE

National Trails Day: www.americanhiking.org/events/ntd

National Men's Health Week: www.menshealthweek.org

JULY

National Recreation and Parks Month: www.nrpa.org

SEPTEMBER

National 5-A-Day Week: www.5aday.gov

National Women's Health and Fitness Day:
www.fitnessday.com/women/index.htm

National Family Health and Fitness Day:
www.fitnessday.com/family/index.htm

OCTOBER

Healthy Lung Month: www.lungusa.org/healthylungmonth/index.html

International Walk to School: www.iwalktoschool.org

Walk to School Day: www.walktoschool-usa.org

NOVEMBER

American Diabetes Month: www.diabetes.org

World Run Day: www.runday.com

additional dates:

The Bicycling Event Guide:
<http://bikelink.com/>

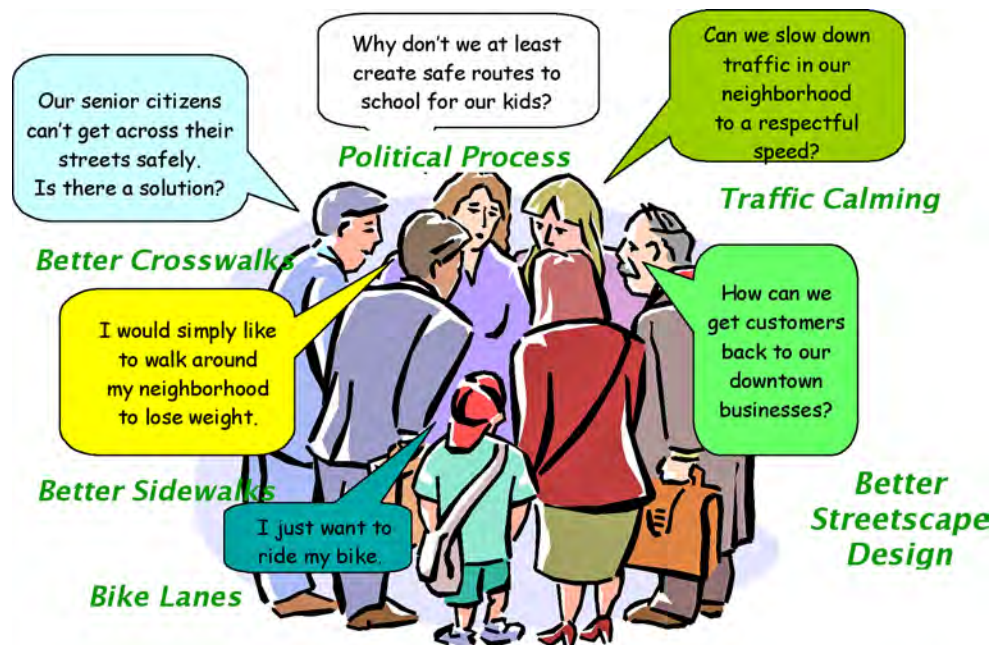
The American Heart Association Heart Walks:
www.americanheart.org

action steps

Taking steps toward permanent change: Beyond the Walking Group

If there is no safe place for you to walk in your neighborhood or at work, hitting the treadmill is one answer. Getting involved to advocate for a walkable community is the long term solution. Pedestrian advocates work with local towns and cities to promote good sidewalks, walking and biking paths, pleasant parks, and healthier communities.

COMMON CONCERNS:



HOW TO BUILD ADVOCATES:

- Review America Walks' "Ten Essentials of Pedestrian Advocacy" (See Attachment 9: Ten Essentials of Pedestrian Advocacy).
- Build partnerships by connecting walk group participants with the local parks and recreation department. Offering to help with maintenance activities can lead to opportunities to provide input on walking facilities.
- Complete community service such as cleaning up debris and improving the surfaces of existing facilities to encourage more walking.
- Develop a Community Project with your walk group to address relevant community issues such as the lack of safe, accessible pathways.
- Help organize a Walk to School event.
- Attend local government meetings, including the planning commission, to provide input about community walkability.



- With participants, create a walkway or trail that links neighborhoods, downtown business districts and/or routes that highlight a community's historic and cultural features.

Improving walkways can mean the installation of sidewalks, hiking paths, nature interpretive trails and exercise courses. Waterfront areas, utility corridors, railroad right-of-ways and planned developments are good places to start.

To start, survey your community by performing a walking audit and seek community input to determine where a walkway is needed.

Set up a meeting with stakeholders to discuss the route.

Note: do not be discouraged if you don't see immediate physical changes: it takes time for infrastructure change to catch up to programmatic efforts.

- Consider hosting a Walkable Community Workshop to develop an action plan to create a safe, walkable community.



Walkable Community Workshops

provide an opportunity for a group of decision makers, citizens, planners, or other stakeholders to experience a pedestrian environment together. A local presenter begins with a visual introduction to walkable environments, providing local and

national examples. The group leader then directs the group along a selected neighborhood route in a walk audit, pointing out good and bad walking conditions and encouraging participants to train their eyes to do the same. The session may focus on general walkability, specific problems, or important routes, such as access to community centers, retirement homes, schools, and so on. Discussions focus on people's observations, likes and dislikes, and potential solutions, as well as specific technical or political challenges to implementation. The workshop ends with agreement on action items or priority projects. Workshops dramatically raise group awareness of issues that enable walkability. For more information about Walkable Community Workshops, please visit: <http://www.caphysicalactivity.org/wcw.html>

Taking steps toward permanent change: Beyond the Walking Group

HOW TO USE WALKABILITY CHECKLISTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY WALKABILITY (SEE ATTACHMENT 1: WALKABILITY CHECKLIST):

GOAL:

- Walkability checklists are used to answer the question "How walkable is your community?"

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- Neighbors
- Elected leaders, City Council and Planning Commission, Police, Department of Public Works, and other government officials
- Schools
- Faith-based communities
- Civic organizations



HOW IT WORKS:

- Pick a place to walk and use the Walkability Checklist to decide if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk.
- Read over the checklist before you go, and as you walk, note the location of things you would like to change.
- At the end of your walk, give each question a rating.
- Add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk overall.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS:

- Trim trees or bushes that block the street and ask your neighbors to do the same.
- Ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced and report scary dogs to the animal control department.
- Take your checklist results and write an op-ed or a letter to the mayor or planning department.
- Organize a neighborhood speed-watch program and request increased police enforcement.
- Organize a community clean-up or tree-planting day.
- Encourage schools to teach walking safely and to start safe walking programs.
- Tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist — emphasize that pedestrian-friendly communities are places with a high quality of life, often translating into increased property values, business growth and increased tourism.
- Speak up at city council meetings or petition the city or town for walkways and gather neighborhood signatures. Let them know that with more people walking, communities experience reduced traffic demands, improved air quality and greater physical fitness.

The California Center for Physical Activity provides school Walkability Checklists in eleven languages, including: [Armenian](#), [Bosnian](#), [Cambodian](#), [Chinese](#), [English](#), [Hmong](#), [Korean](#), [Lao](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#)

Excerpted from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center [www.shapenews.org]

how to promote walking groups in target populations

Target: Working With Older Adults

Older adults have specialized pedestrian needs, such as increased time to cross streets, access to shady trails with benches and clearly marked crosswalks.

“As the ‘baby boom’ generation ages, the number of Americans 65 years and older will double from 35 million to 70 million by the year 2030. Regular, moderate physical activity can extend the lifespan and prevent or slow the development of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes, as well as decrease the likelihood of falls, arthritis, pain, and depression.”¹³

Older Adult Walk Groups encourage and support a variety of physical abilities and are flexible and accommodating. Goals of the walk group can include:

- Identifying personal and environmental barriers to walking by older adults
- Determining potential environmental and policy solutions to reduce barriers to walking by older adults
- Developing an action plan to advocate for and implement identified solutions

CASE STUDY: SACRAMENTO’S OLDER ADULT “NEIGHBORHOOD WALK” PROGRAM

Since 2000, Sacramento’s walking program, “Neighborhood Walk,” has provided a social support network to increase physical activity among older adults.

The City of Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department created ten walking groups based in diverse geographic neighborhoods. City staff collaborated with community leaders to tell residents about the groups. Print materials about the walking groups included ads in regional newspapers, articles in community newsletters, and fliers placed in local establishments and every neighborhood mailbox.

Though time- and resource-intensive, the door-to-door method was an effective way to recruit participants. With residents’ support, city staff organized the walking groups. Once the groups were established, city staff provided minimal oversight. The groups are self-paced, self-motivated, and self-directed. At the beginning of the program, staff helped groups establish a route with a neutral meeting place, such as a park or community center. Now groups determine their own routes and meeting times.





The city provided small incentives such as “Neighborhood Walk” t-shirts and sun visors to motivate participants. To recruit more members, groups distributed fliers as they walked. City staff encouraged groups to meet socially outside of the walking groups to strengthen group bonds.

PARTICIPATION: KEEPING PARTICIPANTS MOTIVATED

Of the ten original groups, five remained after the first two years. However, through promotion of the “Neighborhood Walk” program city staff reestablished two of the groups that disbanded and created an additional six groups. In 2005, sixteen “Neighborhood Walk” groups are sustained. City staff found motivational activities — a lecture series, which meets every six weeks on various health and aging issues, and a newsletter profiling older walkers — key to sustaining groups. Quarterly social functions, such as barbecues, are also held. Select walking groups have been featured on television spots, which provide positive feedback for participants and establish new community norms. Older adults are inspired by newsletter testimonials from older adult walkers and have joined walking groups after hearing about people’s improved health from participation in the “Neighborhood Walk” program.

Based on group records, approximately 25% of the initial participants continue to walk in the walking groups, on their own, or with a neighbor. Reasons for the dissolution of groups vary; for example, one lost momentum during the winter. Traditionally, about 50% of individuals drop out of an exercise program in the first 3-6 months. Relative to historic performance, the Sacramento program's 25% retention rate after five years is a success, especially given the reliance on one staff member, part-time employees, and unpaid interns.

PARTNERS: MULTI-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

- Residents
- City government and policymakers
- Community and service groups, such as neighborhood associations
- Local businesses
- Universities and colleges
- Police

THE BOTTOM LINE: FUNDING

For the first two years, the program and staff were partially funded by the state through its preventive services block grant from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Currently, the program is funded under a three-year grant from the private California Wellness Foundation.

The City of Sacramento has absorbed residual expenses and uses unpaid interns as recreation aides to minimize cost. The city plans to continue support for the walking groups, regardless of future funding from outside sources.

FUTURE PLANS: INCREASING FITNESS ACROSS GENERATIONS

City staff seeks to build inter-generational groups, an idea that originated in the walking groups. Although the groups were originally designed for those 50 years and older, a range of walkers joined the groups. Creating inter-generational groups would have several benefits:

- Promoting physical activity across the lifespan;
- Helping older adults feel less threatened by youth in the neighborhood, a possible barrier to walking;
- Expanding social networks through interaction between neighbors of different ages;
- Reducing social isolation felt by some residents; and
- Helping make physical activity a social norm.

Excerpted from Partnership for Prevention [www.prevent.org]; From the field for Active Aging Programs Valuation measures of senior Walking Programs



Target: Working With Children

HOW TO START A WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM

Walking School Buses encourage communities to support children walking to school in groups accompanied by an adult. The goal is to create standard routes to school that children will walk with adult supervision. Children are picked up as the 'bus' walks to school. Parents can schedule the 'driver' duty and even pull a wagon for the book bags to make walking easier for kids and provide adults with a better workout. A bike train is the same concept as the Walking School Bus. Adult supervisors "pick up" students at their homes and they bicycle to school rather than walk.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS:

- Parents/PTAs
- School personnel
- Police
- Seniors/Senior Centers
- Neighbors/Neighborhood Associations
- Recreation Departments/Community Recreation Centers

HOW IT WORKS:

Each October, millions of children, parents, teachers and community leaders across the globe walk to school to celebrate International Walk to School Day. Walk to School Day can become a catalyst for ongoing efforts to increase

walking throughout the year. Daily walking alerts people to the need for sidewalks and trails, safe street crossings, more cautious drivers, safe walkers and bicyclists, and even state legislation to fund improvements. The desire to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist injuries, restore childhood mobility, improve basic health, and reduce automobile traffic near schools has inspired a wide variety of programs that share the name "Safe Routes to School." These projects have emerged from concerned communities around the country, sometimes under different names.

The Walking School Bus is one strategy to get kids to walk using a safe, supervised route. It brings together a small group of students with one or more adults on their walks to and from school. Typically, the students live near one another. Even if they already walk to school, the benefit of the Walking School Bus is that it provides a consistent, supervised system in which children can walk to school under the watchful eye of an adult. Interested adults volunteer for the program by signing their name next to where they live on street maps displayed at the local school.

Clusters of households are identified and linked. Safe and enjoyable routes are mapped out for the group. They can identify potential problem intersections along the route and monitor them so children can cross safely. The involved adults become part of the problem-solving process in their neighborhood.

SUGGESTED ACTION STEPS:

- One at a Time. Find a group of families who live close to each other and ask them to organize a Walking School Bus. This generally results in one Walking School Bus at the school, at least initially.
- Organize an Interested Persons Meeting. Organize a meeting with key stakeholders that will include members of the school administration, interested teachers, parents, police and school volunteers. The purpose is to create a common understanding of the purpose of a walking bus, and identify individuals to take responsibility for organizing the effort. It may take several meetings to sort out potential routes, schedules and volunteer "drivers."
- Network the School. Survey the school community to gauge interest in joining a Walking School Bus and sort the responses into potential routes. A sample survey can be found at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/resources.htm. Organize a meeting so people can set the schedule, driver roster and contact person for each Walking School Bus. The contact person acts as the coordinator for new people wishing to join the Walking School Bus.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- An outreach and information strategy to reach potential users
- Interested parents on key streets or buildings
- Volunteers to "drive" the bus
- A regular pattern or schedule that a bus "follows"
- Perform a Walkability Checklist for each route (See Attachment 1: Walkability Checklist)
- Parental consent for each student "riding" the bus

ORGANIZER TALKING POINTS:

- Roughly 10% of children nationwide walk to school regularly. Even among those kids living within a mile of their school, only 25% are regular walkers.
- Fewer cars will be on the roads around the school, creating a safer environment for children.
- Gives children a sense of independence while “being a part of a team” walking to school.
- Provides a safe, non-polluting, and convenient alternative for children traveling to and from school.
- Children and adults get exercise and gain the many health benefits of moderate physical activity.
- Children meet their neighbors, each other, and become part of the community instead of viewing it from the back seat of a car.
- Parents gain “extra time” when they don’t have to accompany their children to school every day.
- Helps teach children good road sense and safety.

RESOURCES:

- KidsWalk-to-School Guide: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnps/kidswalk>
- Safe Routes to School National Summary: <http://www.transact.org/report.asp?id=49>
- Walking School Bus: www.walkingschoolbus.org

Excerpted from "The Shape We're In," supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [http://www.rwjf.org/files/newsroom/shapeSchool.pdf]

Target: Working in Underserved Communities

BUILDING ADVOCACY TO CREATE NEW WALKING PATHS

CASE STUDY: BOYLE HEIGHTS

Boyle Heights, CA is a small, densely populated urban community east of downtown Los Angeles. Seventy-five percent of the city's 91,000 residents (US Census, 2000) were born outside of the US in Mexico or elsewhere in Latin America (LA Department of City Planning), and most primarily speak Spanish or are bilingual. Residents' median income was just under \$21,500 in 2000 (US Census). Designated as a redevelopment zone at the city, state, and federal levels, Boyle Heights was eligible for funding through the City of Los Angeles Redevelopment Zone, California State Enterprise Zone, and Federal Empowerment Zone projects.

THE PROJECT

With no nearby parks available, exercise-minded Boyle Heights residents looking to walk or jog in the neighborhood did laps around a cemetery. The centrally located Evergreen Cemetery provided a convenient location, but the sidewalks' poor condition made the route increasingly more treacherous over time, creating a barrier to health-promoting activity. With an idea to create a jogging path through the neighborhood, resident Diana Terrango, James Rojas of the Latino Urban Forum and several leaders approached Los Angeles City Councilmember Nick Pacheco, who agreed to support the plan if the community did. The newly formed Evergreen Jogging Path Coalition (EJPC) presented their plan at community meetings and neighbors loved the idea. With community support behind them, the EJPC began to formalize their plan. They documented the conditions of the sidewalk:

- holes that measured "half a foot deep or more,"
- "root systems that have caused the sidewalk to buckle,"
- "a ½ foot gully" caused by weeds and erosion,
- trash strewn along adjacent dirt paths, and
- "few pedestrian crosswalks" or traffic stops on perimeter streets to protect pedestrians using the space.

Rather than replace the sidewalks with new cement, the group decided to pursue construction of a rubberized path. "I was pushing to have recycled, rubberized asphalt that was high quality and would stand the test of time," said Lupe Vela, manager for sustainability programs at the Department of Public Works. "We wanted to make sure everyone could walk on it safely." The next time the EJPC met with Pacheco they brought a clear statement about the problems along with proposed solutions. Encouraged by community support for the project, Councilmember Pacheco secured \$800,000 from the County Department of Parks and Recreation to build a continuous, rubberized jogging path that would be safe and comfortable for pedestrians and joggers. This path became the first public sidewalk in the country to be designated a recreational public space.

By pulling together the various skills, experiences and resources of Boyle Heights residents, community activists, and government agencies, the EJPC took advantage of what limited open space was available in the neighborhood to create a fitness-promoting resource for the whole community.

Excerpted from Prevention Institute's "THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH: 11 Profiles of Neighborhood Transformation" [http://www.preventioninstitute.org/pdf/BE_full_document_110304.pdf]



Target: Walking in Rural Areas

CASE STUDY: WATSONVILLE SLOUGH TRAILS

The Watsonville Slough is a natural large fresh water marsh running through the center of the town of Watsonville. Recently, the City of Watsonville has begun to improve public access to the slough, and develop a network of 6 miles of trails with various access points, connecting residential areas, schools, parks and shopping centers. With the wetlands inaccessible and untouched for years, pedestrians had previously been walking along dirt pathways next to four lane roads with heavy traffic, and in other similar unsafe conditions. The slough trail network project is a great example of a citywide effort to promote alternative means of transportation, enhance walkability, access to recreation, and encourage overall active living.

Watsonville is an agricultural town, with a predominantly Latino population of almost 50,000 in the southern part of Santa Cruz County. An estimated nineteen percent of the individuals live in poverty and ten percent of families do not have access to a car. People do walk to the shopping centers, schools and houses located around the slough. Before the trails were built, many residents were walking in unsafe conditions along the highways, crossing busy streets, and sometimes crossing the wetlands over make shift bridges made out of trash and shopping carts.

The Watsonville Department of Public Works formulated an idea to open up the slough area and build a connected network of accessible walking and biking trails. Getting this idea off the ground, however, was no easy task. When the city started to reveal their plans to the public there were some objections by local residents and property owners along the slough, as they did not want people walking through what many considered their back yard. Yet, city staff was convinced that people would be excited once they learned more about the overall benefits that such project would have for the entire community. The Public Works department drafted a Master Plan that presented the entire scheme of the trail project and clearly outlined the goals and objectives of the project. Once the plan was presented to the community, residents were quick to see the value of the trails and started supporting the plan. Eventually it received City Council approval and the project was underway.

The Bike and Pedestrian Task Force was established a couple years ago to monitor and survey pedestrian and bike activity, and to advocate for improved pedestrian and bicycling facilities and safety. It monitors bike and pedestrian injuries and fatalities, runs bike and pedestrian safety campaigns, conducts walkability surveys in the community, submits press releases, and generally supports walking and biking activities. The task force has become increasingly involved with promoting the health and safety of the trails in the wetlands. They recognize that the trails have created safe routes for bikes and pedestrians linking residential areas with commercial and retail; allowing people to walk or bike to the grocery store, schools and more. The project is recognized as a major accomplishment in improving the community's overall health and well being. The task force is planning to conduct a study of bike and pedestrian activity and injuries after the completion of the trails to compare to their data from years before the trails were built.

In addition, the city and the task force are collaborating in promoting several events related to the slough in the near future. Residents are starting walking clubs, there are plans for a Monterey Regional Bird Festival to be located in the wetlands, there is a new nature center facility located within the wetlands, there have been maps and promotional materials printed in Spanish and English, environmental groups are conducting restoration projects, and schools are using it for educational purposes. Watsonville has been very successful in coming together and realizing the full potential of the local asset it has with its wetland. A vision, a will, and consistency have turned vacant land into what is now a significant asset for improved mobility, accessibility and overall better health for the entire community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See the Wetlands of Watsonville website: www.wetlandsofwatsonville.org

See a map of the trails network: <http://www.wetlandsofwatsonville.org/trailmap1.pdf>

Excerpted from Odyssey's Safe Routes to Healthy Food Toolkit [http://www.odyssey.org/toolkit/]



Target: Walking at Work

HOW TO START A WORKSITE WALKING CLUB:

Any company — including yours — can start a walking club. A walking club can be organized in many ways. The more flexibility that you build into your club, the more members you are likely to attract. Members can walk alone, in pairs, or in groups of almost any size. Encourage family members and friends to join the walk groups. You can schedule walks at work or at many other locations — parks, shopping malls, forest preserves, school tracks, neighborhoods, etc. You can hold walks before, during or after work and on weekends. Walkers can be of any fitness level — strollers to race-walkers.

STEP 1: Recruit three to five people to help you start the walking club. Ask people who are already walking for fitness to be "charter members." Suggest that each charter member ask two or three co-workers to join. That's the beginning of your walking club.

STEP 2: Conduct an interest survey to find out what appeals to your employees. Follow company communication policies. Ask permission to copy and distribute a survey to employees. The survey can be distributed at the end of a department meeting, in the break rooms or cafeteria.

STEP 3: Put up a poster announcing an organizational meeting for the walking club. You may also want to consider sending a voice mail or e-mail message.

STEP 4: Hold the organizational meeting. Prepare a roster and decide on a communication strategy. Discuss and agree on logistical arrangements: Who, What, When, Where, How. Go for a short walk as part of the organizational meeting.

STEP 5: To keep the interest high over time, consider rotating the leadership at least annually. Recognize members when they reach special milestones — 10 miles, 50 miles, 100 miles, etc. or one hour, five hours, 10 hours, etc. You can also provide incentive awards such as T-shirts, shoelaces, patches, movie passes, discounts to sporting goods stores, etc.

OTHER TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED:

- Provide a way for people to log their mileage or walking time. Calendars, cards or computerized exercise logs are effective examples of tools to monitor walking.
- Obtain support and permission from your organization's management, often human resources.
- Request any necessary budget for the program.
- Check with your legal department for possible liability issues with the activity club.
- The American College of Sports Medicine resource listed below has sample liability forms and a health history Par-Q (Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire) that participants may need to sign (See Attachment 4: Sample Release Form).
- Prepare maps or mark routes or trails in the area that are suitable for walking (safe, well-lighted, appropriate surface, etc.). Having alternate trails can provide variety.

- Mark trails in intervals of one-fourth or one-half mile. You may need to borrow or rent a mileage wheel to gauge distances. Check with a local parks and recreation office, health club or surveying company.
- Post a list of bad weather options (e.g., indoor shopping malls or climbing stairs).

Monthly meetings work well during the school months, September through May. It may be hard to get people together during the summer months because of vacation schedules.

Ideas include:

- September: New member orientation; goal setting; motivational speaker
- October: Shoe clinic; cold weather training; American Heart Walk event
- November: Holiday survival, health tips
- December: Holiday party
- January: Weight loss tips
- February: Walking for a Healthy Heart
- March: Relaxation techniques; yoga demonstration
- April: Race walking; orienteering clinic
- May: Walking vacations; warm weather training tips

Other ideas include a two-step or line dancing class, stretching clinic, advanced walking techniques, etc. Keep up members' interest with special promotions and tracking incentives.

Plan a special event or outing on weekends at least once a quarter. Encourage group members to invite friends or family members.

Have a contest to think of a name, slogan or both for the walking club or subgroups.

As a club, participate in local 5-K or 10-K walk or run events. Dress in costumes, if appropriate. Walkers can be of any fitness level — slow-walkers to race-walkers.

Don't forget to work with employers to offer incentives, such as a bonus for reducing health insurance costs by being physically active, offering free transit passes and even offering financial rewards for using alternative transportation (visit http://transportation.stanford.edu/incentives_programs/CleanAirCash.shtml to learn about Stanford's innovative Clean Air Cash program).

Excerpted From American Heart Association, 1996

ADDITIONAL WORKSITE WALKING RESOURCES:

Colorado Worksite Resource Kit: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/COPAN/resourcekits/WorksiteResourceKit.pdf>

Worksite Walkability Audit Tool: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/walkability/audit_tool.htm



Target: Safe Routes to Healthy Foods

If walking in underserved community lacking access to healthy foods, where possible, arrange for the walk to culminate by a healthy food district or farmer's market people can get to after work.

SAN BERNARDINO CASE STUDY

Sonia Vega, a public health and nutrition educator for the county of San Bernardino, had a problem: she was supposed to teach families participating in the WIC program at Monterey Elementary School about physical activity and nutrition. But her target audience, Latino women with children in the City of San Bernardino's Norton neighborhood, had other ideas; they were concerned with gangs, trash, dangerous stray dogs, hazardous street crossings, speeding cars, and other ills. Thus began a two-year journey with about 25 families that started with a nutrition education program and ended with the transformation of the Norton neighborhood and creation of the city's first Spanish-speaking neighborhood association.

Sonia worked to understand factors that prevented the families from practicing good nutrition. The problems were manifold. Transportation was one, of the 25 participants, most of them women, only half had regular access to a vehicle. Transit was limited and grocery stores that provided good fruits and vegetables were not within walking distance. Another dilemma was simply the availability of nutritious food. Through grocery store visits Sonia and her students learned about the atrocious quality of fruits and vegetables, confirming the students' complaints about tomatoes that had no flavor, bruised fruit, and the preponderance of pre-packaged, costly foods.

Sonia discovered a resource for solving some these food access problems. The mayor of San Bernardino recently created a Food Policy Council (FPC), charged with improving the supply of healthy foods and services. Sonia was

able to provide the FPC a means for achieving some of their goals and help the Norton neighborhood create their own supply of fresh produce. Using a plot of land granted by the Monterey Elementary School, and with volunteer help from a bilingual agronomist, members of the weekly nutrition group planted their own garden. Participants signed up for watering and weeding shifts and in return began taking home many pounds of tomatoes, tomatillos, jalapeños, lettuce, carrots, and other fresh and tasty produce.

As the summer of 2002 wore on, however, it became clear that the highly mobile families were finding it difficult to keep up with the on-site garden. Sonia was quick to find a solution, and again with the help of the FPC she converted the immobile garden into many transportable ones. The FPC sponsored the purchase of seeds, soil, containers, and gardening tools while Sonia prepared easily replicable lesson plans on creating and maintaining a container garden. Participants pledged to teach friends and family gardening skills in return for the equipment and seeds. Several months later, Sonia attended a session where 10 class members taught 80 newcomers the principles of container gardening. This program also resulted in an information booklet on container gardening, produced in English and Spanish, in cooperation with a local food bank and shared with local WIC officials.

For Sonia, what began as a nutrition and physical education training program developed into a full-fledged neighborhood movement. As the complex relationships between food access, transportation, the built environment, and physical activity came into view, Sonia and the residents of the Norton neighborhood found solutions rooted in civic activism, collaboration, and hard work. Sonia's and the Norton Neighborhood Nutrition Network project's accomplishments demonstrate how public health officials can play an important role in helping residents make their communities healthier places to live.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Norton Neighborhood Nutrition Network Website:

<http://www.sbcounty.gov/eatwell/NutritionNetworkHome.htm>

Healthy Food, Healthy Communities: Improving Access and Opportunities Through Food Retailing PolicyLink Report:

<http://www.policylink.org/pdfs/HealthyFoodHealthyCommunities.pdf>

Excerpted from Odyssey's Safe Routes to Healthy Food Toolkit [http://www.odyssey.org/toolkit/]



Target: Pedestrian Advocacy

WALK RIVERSIDE

The Riverside County Department of Public Health received a physical activity pilot project grant, funded by the California Nutrition Network. The goal of the project was to offer nutrition education and walking clubs to low income women in the City of Riverside. To launch the project in the community a health fair and walk with the Mayor took place. The mayor of Riverside, being an avid walker, wanted to promote walking for health in the City. The mayor learned from the project coordinator that in order to promote walking, the community needed to be safe and walkable. Therefore, the Riverside County Department of Public Health made a presentation to the City Council about the health and safety benefits of walkable communities.

Riverside has great places to walk but without a Pedestrian Master Plan, finding safe places to walk in some neighborhoods was challenging. At the Mayor's suggestion, a thirty-eight member task force was convened. An additional grant from Kaiser Permanente provided funding for a task force facilitator. The task force attended a Walkable Community Workshop, conducted walk audits in the five highest pedestrian crash zones, and developed a brochure that includes forty-three walking trails and routes. Walkability assessments were done on each route by task force members. Facilitator Ryan Snyder, one of the California Center for Physical Activity Walkable Community Experts, developed a Pedestrian Master Plan for the task force. The task force prepared a report that reviewed policies that promote walkability, recommended design guidelines, suggested capital improvements, prioritized recommendations, and provided action steps. The report was presented to the City Council, who approved the pedestrian master plan.



This project started out to promote walking clubs and resulted in a policy effort to change how sidewalks and streets should be designed in a city to promote health and safety.

Program Coordinator: Sandy Jackson

County of Riverside Department of Public Health

Injury Prevention Services

*Provided by Sandy Jackson, Riverside County Department of Public Health
Injury Prevention Services- Livable Communities [www.rivco-buildhealth.org]*



ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Walkability Checklist, Source: Pedestrian and Bicycle Info Center

Attachment 2: Stretching Routine, Source: Western Australia Walk Leader Training Manual

Attachment 3: Sample Walk Log and Walk Journal

Attachment 4: Sample Release Form

Attachment 5: Sample Press Release

Attachment 6: Walk Route Planning Checklist

Attachment 7: Sample Evaluation

Attachment 8: Pedometer Information from Mark Fenton

Attachment 9: Ten Essentials of Pedestrian Advocacy

¹ Duncan GE, Anton SD, Sydeman SJ, Newton RL Jr, Corsica JA, Durning PE, Ketterson TU, Martin AD, Limacher MC, Perri MG. Prescribing exercise at varied levels of intensity and frequency: a randomized trial. Arch Intern Med. 2005 Nov 14;165(20):2324-5. Citation from: <http://walking.about.com/od/healthbenefits/a/aerobicwalk2005.htm>

² Davison & Grant 1993, US Dept of Health 1996, British Heart Foundation 2000. Citation from: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/INFO/everyone/health.html#Benefits>

³ Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/mm.htm>

⁴ Building Investment Value in Our Economy and Marketplace, http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/land_use.cfm

⁵ "The Business Case for Active Transportation: The Economic Benefits of Walking and Cycling," Richard Campbell and Margaret Wittgens for Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, 2004, p.42-43.

⁶ Spanier PA, and Allison KR. General Social Support and Physical Activity: An Analysis of the Ontario Health Survey. Canadian Journal of Public Health, 92(3):210-213, 2001.

⁷ The Green Commuter, A Publication of the Clean Air Council

⁸ "Safer Places - The Planning System and Crime Prevention," www.odpm.gov.uk/planning

⁹ "How to Measure Your Stride-Step Length," <http://walking.about.com/cs/pedometers/a/pedometerset.htm>

¹⁰ "Target Heart Rates," American Heart Association, <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4736>

¹¹ Mark Fenton, "America's Walking"

¹² "From the Field: Four Communities Implement Active Aging Programs" (2002), http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/CCFAA_case_studies.pdf

¹³ Vita J, Terry R, Hubert H, Fries J. Aging, health risks, and cumulative disability. N Eng J Med. 1998; 338:1035-1041.