

Starting a Walking Club in Your Workplace

Participating in regular physical activity can improve your health and reduce your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. Walking on your own or as a group is an easy and inexpensive way to add physical activity to your work day. Walking at work can lower your stress levels, help to prevent fatigue and injury, and improve concentration. Here are some tips to help you start your own workplace walking club.



How to Start a Walking Club?

- Assess for interest – find out who wants to take part in a walking club
- Talk it up – ask friends and co-workers to join you
- Make it fun, easy and accessible. Start gradually – it need not be complicated!
- Set group goals (i.e. to socialize, to improve physical activity levels, to feel better)
- Start your club on an informal basis, becoming more structured as needs and interests grow
- Whether your walking club is formal or informal, you need to set up the basics - where, when and how long the group will walk

Where to Walk?

- Choose routes that are suitable for everyone
- Plan short indoor routes that could be used to get started or in rainy weather
- Design a twenty minute outdoor walking route, longer if time is available and for those more experienced

When to Walk?

- Ask when employees would prefer to walk
- Choose times that are suitable for most employees
- Encourage employees to walk during their break and get out for some fresh air
- Promote a lunch hour walking club
- Organize a walking time before or after work

The Benefits of a Walking Club

- Allows an opportunity for employees to work toward meeting the required 30-60 minutes of physical activity each day
- Provides an opportunity to meet new people and get to know others better
- Walking club members motivate and support each other
- Walking in numbers is safer
- A workplace active living program can improve job satisfaction, morale and productivity. It can reduce absenteeism, as well as retain and attract employees

Making it Fun

- Keep track of personal or group progress in creative ways (i.e. “Walk Across Canada”)
- Hold a contest or challenge between departments or work units
- Add variety (i.e. speed walking, climbing stairs, using pedometers)
- Offer incentives such as prizes or certificates of recognition
- Walk to raise money for a charity

Promoting Your Walking Club

- Promotion is important to ensure the success of your walking club
- Use voice mail, flyers, posters or email to get the word out

Important Points to Remember

- Wear comfortable shoes
- Dress for the weather – use layers for cooler temperatures, hat and gloves in cold weather
- Be sun safe all year round – wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection and a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15
- Employee safety must be kept in mind when planning your activities

**For more information, contact
Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653**

