

Walking @ Work Toolkit

What is Walking @Work?

Walking @Work is an organized group that meets routinely to take walking breaks. Walking groups are especially great for workplaces that have set schedules which allows you to meet routinely at the same day and time, and have walkable routes in or accessible to the workplace. Start a department walking group today to encourage walking at work all year long!

Background

It is recommended to engage in 30-minutes of physical activity 5 days per week to maintain cardiovascular health. Forming a walking group is an easy way to get in those 30-minutes. Walking regularly helps fight stress, elevate energy level, and much more. Walking with others can help employees stay motivated and develop sustainable healthy habits.

How to Implement Walking @Work?

Each week, employees meet at an identified time and place once or twice a week for a short walking break. Walking groups can take place indoors, outdoors, or even around the perimeter of your cubicles. You can have fun by changing up the routes or going to different destinations. Encourage participation by recognizing milestones and providing incentives for frequent walkers.

Instructions

Consider Logistics

- **Identify a Walk Leader.** Identify one or more individuals who are committed to walking weekly and are willing to 'lead' the walk. Their role is to lead the walking group and keep participants engaged and interested. It's a good idea to have more than one lead as a back-up to each other.
- **Select an Interesting Route.** Consider using [Mapometer](#) to find a local 15-30 minutes walking route. Here are [instructions](#) on how to use the website.
 - **Do a test walk.** Scan the route during the time of day that you plan to walk.
 - Did you have room to walk? Will there be enough room for your walking group?
 - Was it easy to cross the streets?
 - Did drivers yield to pedestrians?
 - Was your walk pleasant and safe?
 - **Have a backup route.** Remember that on some days, the great outdoors aren't too inviting due to weather--or construction can lead to sidewalks being closed. Consider mapping out an indoor route through the office and common stairwells. If that is not possible, consider playing a [15 minute walk](#) video in a common area.
- **Set a Specific Time.** Pick a time that's convenient for most employees. Make sure your Walking Group meets at least once or twice a week. Schedule outings at a time when there are no recurring meetings. 30-minute lunch time walks work well for most groups, but you can also consider shorter 15-minute walks to accommodate a common break time.

Advertise & promote:

- Send [an email](#) to all employees. Ask your HR/ communications department to add a message in the next department e-newsletter.
- [Post flyers](#) in highly visible areas such as a hallway or break area with permission from management or building facilities.

Start walking!

- **Create a name/slogan for your walking group.** Some fun names include: Holy Walkamolies, Sole Mates, Walking Warriors, Pedominators, Happy Feet, Walk San Francisco. Be creative!
- **Start walking promptly.** To ensure that you respect everyone's designated break time, make sure to start on time. If members show up after the clock, then let them know that they can catch up by themselves, or create their own group by asking a colleague to walk with them for that particular day.
- **Emphasize Inclusivity.** While walking, recognize all fitness levels. Encourage everyone to walk at their own pace, and if needed, walk with people who have a different pace than the rest of the group.

Tips to Encourage Participation

- **Change up the route.** Walk to a destination. Start or end the walk just in time for an existing event, such as a local farmers market. You can also consider walking to and through a local park, walking to a view, or getting some steps up and down a neighborhood hill.
- **Provide ongoing support.** [Recognize milestones](#) for 25, 50, 100 miles. Use your Mapometer routes to help you calculate the number of miles accomplished. Provide ongoing giveaways and raffles for showing up or bringing a friend, and not just at the beginning. Email well-being@sfgov.org for incentives that can be provided for participants.

- **Make walking fun.**
 - Highlight landmarks that people can look for along the way to make it a scavenger hunt.
 - If there are other walking groups, consider having a competition to see which group can walk the most in steps/miles/minutes each month.
 - Start the conversation. Give them something to talk about by selecting a topic for the walk. They can chat about the latest book they're reading, favorite vacation they've ever been to, or what they are most looking forward to for the summer.
 - Have quarterly socials. barbecues, picnics, or healthy break time snacks are all good socials to have after scheduled walks.
 - Train together to walk for a cause. Look up [charity walks](#) around your area.