

## Walking to RECHARGE Toolkit

### What is Walking to RECHARGE?

**Walking to RECHARGE** is an organized time for people to meet routinely to take short and [mindful walks](#) during the workday. Walking breaks are especially great for workplaces that have set schedules, that allow for routine walks as well as workplaces with accessible routes. Start a department-wide walking group today to encourage employees to walk at work all year long!

### Background

Besides the physical benefits, walking has positive psychological benefits. Walking allows you to physically move away from stressors and gives your brain a chance to reflect and relax. Studies have shown that walking helps to reduce stress hormones and improve memory and attention, which helps improve productivity. Walking to RECHARGE also provides opportunity for employees to connect with one another during the workday by engaging in a refreshing walk and conversation.

### How to Implement Walking to RECHARGE?

**Gauge Interest.** Determine when and where the walking group should take place. Plan a time and day that works with employees' schedules to meet. Walking routes can be indoors, outdoors, or even around the perimeter of your workplace. If available and safe to do so, consider going to nearby parks or scenic trails. Plan walking routes ahead of time and use the conversation prompts included in this document as conversation starters.

## Instructions

### Consider Logistics

- **Walking Partners.** Walking with another person is a great way to refresh while getting to know someone better. If employees are working remotely, walking partners can connect by phone or MS Teams. If partners are meeting virtually via phone or other device, provide tips to be mindful of their surroundings and to use Bluetooth devices or earphones while walking.
- **In-Person Walking Group.** Consider having someone in the group be the walking leader who will choose a route for the day. Decide on the time and place to meet based on employees' schedules.
- **Select Routes.** Consider sharing the [Mapometer](#) with employees to aid them in selecting a local 15-30 minute walking route. Here are [instructions](#) on how to use the website.
  - **Encourage Doing a Test Walk.** Scan the route before the time you plan to walk. Questions to consider include:
    - ✓ 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 weather may prohibit taking an outdoor walk or construction can lead to sidewalks being closed. Consider mapping out an indoor route through the office or common stairwells. Another option is to play 15 minutes of a [nature walk](#) video from a computer in an area with enough space to move around instead.
- **Set a Specific Time.** Employees should choose a time that's convenient for the group. Make sure partners meet 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 people, but you can also consider shorter 15-minute walks to accommodate a common break time.

## Advertise & Promote:

- **Send Department-Wide Emails.** Emails are an effective way to introduce department-wide walking groups. In addition, asking your HR/Communications department to add a message in the next department e-newsletter highlighting this event may be a strong promotion tactic.
- **Hang Flyers.** Post [flyers](#) in highly visible areas such as a hallway or break area with permission from management or building facilities. If working **remotely**, please attach this flyer in newsletters or along with the promotional email.
- Another idea to consider is to add this activity to your department's intranet site and online calendar.

## Start Walking!

- **Start Walking Promptly.** To ensure that you respect everyone's designated break time, make sure to start and complete the walk within set time. If possible, share walking routes ahead of time, employees who join late can catch up with the group.
- **Encourage Fruitful Conversations.** Connecting with others can amplify the de-stressing effect of these walks. Employees are free to use one of these [conversation starters](#) to get to know each other, engage in deeper conversation, and reflect on positive moments.
- **Emphasize Inclusivity.** The walking group lead should be aware and mindful of employees' varying fitness levels and abilities. Encourage everyone to walk at their own pace if needed. Relaxation and physical movement should be for everyone!

## Tips to Encourage Participation

- **Create Team Names/Slogans.** Some fun names for walking groups include: Re-Chargers, Walk of Clarity, Mind your Foot, Mindful Walkers, etc. Feel free to be creative!
- **Walking Reflections.** In a few words, have people share out loud or jot down how they feel pre and post walk. These reflections allow employees to check-in with themselves and to stay connected with other members.
- **Capturing Pictures.** People can take pictures of something they discovered on their walk that made them smile, inspired them, or something they just enjoyed or found memorable on each walk. At the end of this event, people can share the collection of pictures taken throughout their walking breaks.
- **Team Goals.** Another idea is to have groups or partners set goals for the total amount of miles they hope to have walked by the end of a certain date. This can motivate participants and be something they can reflect on and share with others during an all-staff meeting, etc.
- **Change and Share Routes.** Employees are welcome to share exciting, scenic, and favorite routes with each other to try.

Need additional support? Contact [well-being@sfgov.org](mailto:well-being@sfgov.org)