

Let's *Walk!*



CAPITAL AREA
Health Alliance

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Let's Walk!

Welcome and congratulations on starting a walking group!









The Capital Area Health Alliance (CAHA) is excited to assist you on the journey of starting a walking group. Walking groups benefit both individual participants and the community at large by motivating and encouraging others to walk, leading to a healthier community.

The health and success of your walking group is important to us. We would like your help in making this pilot toolkit as useful as possible. Tell us what you like, what you used and what you would change. If you register your walking group with CAHA, we will connect you with other walking group leaders, provide support and give you access to a CAHA Walking Group Facebook page, where you can share success stories and pictures. It will also give CAHA the feedback we need to improve the toolkit for future use.

The United States Surgeon General has released a Call to Action to Step It Up! and be more physically active through walking. Research has shown that social support can be an important influence on an individual's overall health and well-being. Tapping into the social support provided through a walking group can be very beneficial toward sustaining walking efforts. Walking with a group provides accountability, unity and bonding between members.

Walking is easy to begin and sustain. Everyone knows how to do it, and the only equipment you need is a pair of walking shoes. A good goal to reach is to walk for 30 minutes five days a week. Strive to increase your minutes weekly; every step matters.

Walking can help you lose weight, but did you know that walking also...

-  Boosts creativity
-  Manages stress
-  Builds energy
-  Lifts your mood
-  Improves fitness
-  Promotes better sleep
-  Increases self-confidence
-  Is good for your bones

The benefits of walking are endless, and most of all, **walking feels good and is fun!**

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Walking Group Toolkit

Register with CAHA. Use the Walking Group Toolkit Registration form included in the packet.

Organize Your Group.

Who:

- Co-Workers – Are there people at your workplace that are already walking? They could be the start of the walking group.
- Friends – Do you have a group of friends you see on a regular basis? They may be interested in joining a walking group. What about family members?
- Neighbors – Your neighborhood or neighborhood organization is a great place to start a group, and it is close to home.
- Existing Group – Is there an informal walking group that already exists that can be built upon?

Where: Your walk could be more successful if you use a location that is already part of the walkers' routine. Maybe it is walking in your neighborhood or a path near your workplace, walking with other parents from your kids' school or day care, or walking from the senior center, coffee shop or library.

When:

- Make sure you are realistic about what you can commit to.
- Set a specific schedule for day, time and frequency (meet at least once a week).

Plan Your Walk. Use the Planning Checklist included in the packet. Plan an alternate indoor walking route for rain, snow or excessive heat and have a system to communicate route changes to participants.

Promote and Recruit.

- Use the enclosed flyer to spread awareness of the walking group.
- Distribute the flyer to your friends, co-workers or neighbors.
- Distribute the flyer along the walking route.
- Have other group members help distribute the flyer and invite their friends.
- Check with HR to send an email blast to your office and post flyers in the break room.
- Use social media to promote your walking group, engage walkers and maintain excitement.

First Meeting.

- Have everyone introduce themselves. Exchange phone numbers or emails to stay connected.
- Set motivational goals with your group and encourage individual goals (see ideas below).
- Set boundaries and expectations.
 - Do you allow pets on the walk?
 - Are headphones allowed?
 - Can anyone just show up to walk?
- Give the Welcome Kit to each participant, and make sure they fill out and return the first two forms to you.

The Welcome Kit includes:

- Participant Welcome Page
- Individual Registration (pre-survey form) – To be filled out and returned to you
- Preparing for Walking Form – To be filled out and returned to you
- Weekly Walking Journal – Encourage each group participant to keep a journal of minutes walked and how they felt about each walk
- Walking Tips & Resources

Staying Motivated. Ideas include:

- Name your walking group.
- Use the Buddy System. Knowing that you have a buddy that is counting on you to walk with them will help keep you motivated. Be accountable to each other. You can support and encourage your buddy by contacting your buddy if they do not show up to walk.
- Start healthy conversations on your walk - have different themes to discuss during walks.
- Take 5 minutes at the beginning of each walk for one or two people to share the benefits they're gaining from walking.
- Track success and recognize participants' milestone achievements.
- Set a goal to walk so many minutes within a certain time frame, and if you are successful have a potluck to celebrate.
- Walk for a cause.
- Increase your walking to build toward completing a race.
- Mission walk – add a task to your walk such as collecting cans for charity or cleaning up litter.
- Post success on social media.

Measuring Success. CAHA would appreciate your feedback after your group has been walking for three months. Please fill out and return the following items:

- Walking Group Toolkit Registration Form (included in packet)
- Individual Registration Form (included in packet)
- Post-Survey - for individual participants (you will receive after registering)
- Leader Feedback Survey (you will receive after registering)

Walking Group Registration Form

(Return to CAHA)

The Capital Area Health Alliance (CAHA) is excited to assist you on the journey of starting a walking group. It is our goal that the participants in your walking group will increase their knowledge about the benefits of walking, increase the number of minutes they're walking each week as well as increase their confidence in their ability to be physically active. Starting a walking group not only benefits the individual participants of your group but also the community at large by motivating and encouraging others to walk, leading to a healthier community. Registering your walking group with CAHA will provide a forum to connect with and learn from other walking group leaders, receive technical assistance from CAHA and have access to a CAHA Walking Group Facebook page.

Leader Name: _____

Contact Information (phone, email): _____

Walking Group Name: _____

Location of Walk: _____

Is this a newly established walking group? _____

How did you hear about the toolkit? _____

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Walking Group Toolkit, we ask that you please do the following:

- Walk at least once a week for three months
- Keep a weekly attendance log and track group goals
- Utilize the tools and support provided by CAHA
- Submit pre and post participant surveys to CAHA 3 months after start of walking group
- Submit walking group leader survey to CAHA 3 months after start of walking group

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Planning Checklist

(Optional)

Name of Walk:

Day:

Start & Finish Point:

Start Time:

Walk Duration:

Approximate Length of Walk:

Date Beginning:

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Adequate parking
- Access to public transportation
- Availability of public restrooms and drinking fountains
- Shade and seating
- Check walk route for dangers (e.g., uneven paths, tree roots, overhanging bushes/trees, busy roads, slippery surfaces, obstacles)
- Adequate lighting (e.g., streetlights)
- Pre-walk the route; time the walk and pace
- Grade the route (consider hills, distance, and speed to walk in less than 1 hour)
- Do you have a mobile phone in case of emergency?
- Can the route accommodate shorter alternatives for the less fit? Can they turn around at a shorter point? Are there any short cuts? Are there rest spots for the less fit?
- Inform current participants of upcoming route changes, date, and meeting point
- Local government contacted regarding any path maintenance planned



Walking Group Leader Attendance Form

(Optional)

Name & Contact Information	Attendance												
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	

Group Goal #1 _____

Group Goal #3 _____

Group Goal #2 _____

Group Goal #4 _____

Group Goal Examples: come each week, bring a friend, increase total minutes walked by group each week, goal of number of participants













Let's Walk!

Welcome and congratulations on joining a walking group!

This is an exciting time as you begin the journey to getting fit and feeling better through walking. It is important to remember that you are not alone on this journey; you will have the support and encouragement of your group as you grow and motivate each other through walking.

Walking is easy to begin and keep doing. Everyone knows how to do it, and the only equipment you need is a pair of walking shoes. A good goal to reach is to walk for 30 minutes five days a week. If that seems too much, start at your own pace and increase your minutes weekly; every step matters.

Walking can help you lose weight, but did you know that walking also...

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Individual Registration

(return to CAHA)

First Name & First Letter of Last Name: _____ Date: _____

Name of Walking Group: _____

1. Please rate your overall health in general:

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

4. How does walking make you feel?

2. Do you currently walk for physical activity?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many minutes per week?

- Less than 30 minutes
- 30-60 minutes
- 60-90 minutes
- 90-120 minutes
- More than 120 minutes

5. What benefits from walking have you experienced?

3. I usually exercise:

- By myself
- With a friend
- With a group (2 or more)
- With a pet
- Other: _____

6. What is your purpose for joining a walking group?

- Improving health
- Motivation
- Fun
- Meeting new people
- Increasing physical activity
- Weight loss
- Other: _____



Prepare for Walking

The information that you give on this form will remain confidential.

Thank you for your interest in our walking group. Before you begin, please answer the questions below. For most people physical activity should not be a problem. This form will help you decide if you should speak to a doctor before starting.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only do physical activity recommended by a doctor or health professional? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | In the past month have you had a pain in your chest when you were not doing physical activity? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a joint or bone problem that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you know of any reason why you should not do physical activity? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have you been inactive for a long period of time? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there anything health-related that the walk leader should know about? If yes, please explain: _____ |

I understand that if I answered YES to one or more of the above questions, I should seek medical advice before joining a walking group.

If I answered NO honestly to all questions and I am planning to increase my levels of physical activity, I understand that I need to begin slowly and build up gradually.

I understand that I participate in the walking group at my own risk.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Adapted from <http://prevenzione.ulss20.verona.it/com/file/upload/49-WL%20Chapter1%205.pdf>

Weekly Walking Journal

Week of:

This week's goal:

Example: My goal is to walk 120 minutes this week.

Date	Minutes	How I Felt	Notes
Example:	30 minutes	The walk helped me relax.	I slept better Sunday night.
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

My total for this week: _____ minutes

Team Goal(s): _____