

Going and Growing

Congratulations on getting your Club up and walking! You got them motivated, now keep them motivated for big success. Use these tips to make sure your Walking Club doesn't break stride.

Mix It Up

After a while, the same old route can start to get boring. But a few simple tweaks can pump up a dull routine.

- **Experiment with different walking routes.** A change of scenery may be exactly what's needed to keep everyone's legs in gear. If the usual route keeps you on flat terrain, head for the hills. Or if you typically trek a sandy beach, take to the streets. In the summertime, you could dive in for an occasional walk in the pool.
- **Speed things up.** Amp up your routine with interval walking. Here's how it works: Take off with short bursts of fast walking. Slow down to a steady pace for a couple blocks and then crank it up again. It not only adds variety, but you'll also burn more calories and be able to walk longer and with more intensity.
- **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 or favorite vacation spots.
- **Commemorate the achievement.** Celebrate each milestone with a certificate, an American Heart Association water bottle or other gift that you present during a Walking Club gathering. For a workplace Walking Club, highlight the accomplishment in the company newsletter.
- **Gloat a little.** Take pride in the success of your walkers by sharing their triumphs on Facebook.

Offer Incentives

There's nothing like a little incentive to help walkers log more miles. Add some fuel to their willpower by offering goodies.

- T-shirts or hats with your Walking Club's name
- Water bottles
- Pedometers
- Sunscreen
- Educational brochures
- Notebook to record walking log

Recognize Achievements

Don't hold the applause until walkers reach their lofty goals. You can high-five their small victories along the way.

- **Cheer them on.** Recognize your Walking Club all-stars when they reach special milestones – 25 miles, 50 miles, 100 miles. Or set the bar at a certain number of steps or hours walked. This is also a way to guarantee members keep track of their progress in a walking log, where they'll be reminded of their goals.

"Friends in the group will know when you skip, and that little bit of public accountability can help you stick to it on those days when you don't feel like doing it."

Martica Heaner, PhD

Behavioral nutritionist and exercise physiologist
Author of *Cross-Training for Dummies*

Do Something New

Venture off the beaten path and do more with your Walking Club. Rally your walkers for new adventures and special events.

- **Turn a walk into a mission.** Give new purpose to your strides by entering charity walks together.
- **Have some healthy competition.** Organize mileage challenges, either as individuals or as a group against other Walking Clubs. You can also pair up your walkers for a walking scavenger hunt.
- **Don't just walk.** Try a different physical activity from time to time. Take a dance or yoga class, or take a bike tour in your town.
- **Walk 'n learn.** Invite local experts to talk about health and fitness. Ask a dietitian to discuss healthy eating, a fitness trainer to demonstrate stretching exercises and proper walking technique, and a foot specialist to talk about how to prevent foot problems.
- **Combine activities.** Multitask by adding an activity to your walk. The Club could take a "litter walk" and clean up a walking route. Or schedule a post-walk picnic, barbecue or playdate.
- **Start a spinoff.** Feed your Walking Club's social interests by forming other groups, such as a book club, bridge club or sports team.

"I started a walking club in 1989 when I was working as a personal trainer. I got people away from thinking about how their bodies looked or how much weight they wanted to lose and got them focused on something that was measurable that they could improve. So every three weeks, they would test themselves with a one-mile walk. They walked as fast as possible, and it became a competitive goal."

Michael Rohl

Championship racewalker

Track and cross country coach at Mansfield University



Walk with Walgreens is a proud national supporter of the American Heart Association's Walking Clubs.

HOW TO FIND NEW RECRUITS

- Encourage existing members to invite a friend, family member or co-worker to join the Walking Club.
- Continue to promote your Walking Club and the health benefits of walking on Facebook and other social networking sites.
- Post each walk on Meetup Everywhere so that interested walkers can find you.

TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR WALKING CLUB STICK WITH IT

Too busy ... too tired ... too cold out. Are excuses lurking between your Walking Club and their fitness goals? Offer them these tips:

- If last-minute projects and obligations tend to get in the way, walk in the morning.
- Schedule exercise on your calendar by making it a recurring appointment in your email calendar.
- Don't let errands and work sidetrack you. You'll have more energy for your work after you've walked.
- Have a light snack in late afternoon – yogurt and a handful of almonds, or a piece of fruit and a slice of fat-free or low-fat cheese – so you don't experience a late-day dip in energy and talk yourself out of walking.
- Is your schedule so crazy that you've lost time with your spouse or friend? Get them to join you on walks.
- Limit your intake of caffeine, sugary foods and energy drinks so that you don't hit the wall when you should be hitting the road.
- Ask your spouse and children to share the workload so you can carve out time for a walk. They'll see you modeling a healthy lifestyle and learn family responsibility and teamwork.
- A climate-controlled shopping mall can be a great indoor walking option. Many malls open before the stores for walking groups.
- A babysitting exchange with neighborhood moms and dads can help everyone out. One of you watches the kids while the other goes for a walk.