

How to Create a Walking Group



Creating a walking group is easy. All you need are a few people who want to regularly walk together and a plan. Walking with friends, family, neighbors or coworkers can be a great way to get started, stay motivated and make walking fun. Below are a few steps to creating a walking group:

1. **Start small:** You don't have to have a parade to have a successful walking group; even three people can make a good walking group.
 - **Talk with family and friends:** Start by asking those you know to join you. Get a core group of family and friends, then encourage everyone to bring a friend.
 - **Enlist coworkers:** Offices and worksites are a great place to recruit people to walk with you. Post signs in common areas to let people know about your walking group.
 - **Access the internet:** Social media sites are a great way to let a larger audience know about your desire to develop a walking group. Designate a central, public site to meet and make it easier on everyone.
2. **Hold a meeting:** Have all members of walking group meet up to decide
 - how often you want to walk,
 - where you want to walk and
 - the days and time you want to walk.

This meeting is a great time to get everyone's contact information and create a phone tree. This way, if the walk is canceled or someone can't make it, everyone calls only one person.

Keeping the group motivated:

Once you've created a walking group it's important to keep everyone motivated. Here are a few simple ideas for keeping everyone committed to walking:

- **Set realistic group goals.** Decide on a distance the group wants to walk and a timeframe to walk it in. Remember to start out slow and gradually work your way up to longer distances. The team might say they want to walk one mile in 20 minutes within the next four weeks. This might be a very attainable goal for the group, but the members should know they will not do it overnight.
- **Participate in challenges.** Get your group to participate in a timed challenge that has a beginning and end. These give your group members defined parameters and an end goal. Examples of timed challenged include:
 - **Walk Across Texas:** <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/>
 - **President's Fitness Challenge:** www.presidentschallenge.org
- **Sign up for a charity walk.** Identify a charity walk with a cause that resonates with your group. Each day your group meets will be in preparation for the walk and proceeds go to a cause everyone supports.

Forming a walking group is a great way to get active and engage socially with others. Through the group support, making physical activity a regular habit is possible.

