



Holiday Walking Challenge

WEEK 1

Congratulations on taking the first step to improve your health by joining the Holiday Walking Challenge! Walking is an easy way to start and maintain an active lifestyle.¹ Read below for tips to help you collect challenge points and enjoy walking as part of your daily routine.

"An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day."

-Henry David Thoreau

GETTING STARTED

Here are some tips to making walking a part of your daily routine.

BRING FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- Walk with a friend or a group.
- If you have small children, walk with them in a stroller or wagon. Check the weather and consider bringing along water and healthy snacks for you and your child.
- Walk with a pet.
- Walk with members of your community. Consider having walking meetings.

BE PREPARED

- Wear comfortable and supportive walking shoes.
- Store a pair of walking shoes in the car or at your desk at work.
- Mark a walking date on your calendar.

DETERMINE YOUR ROUTE

- Walk in your neighborhood, around the parking lot at your faith community, or at a school, local gym, or other community building.
- Look for safe places to walk in your community like walking trails, sidewalks, or local parks.

SET A TIME AND PLACE

- When at work, walk during your work breaks or at lunch.
- Start slowly. Begin by walking ten minutes at a time.
- Bring a watch or cell phone to keep track of your time.
- Download a free cell phone application to keep track of your steps and distance.
- Commit to meeting members of your community at a designated spot to walk.

STAY POSITIVE

- Starting a new routine can be difficult at first, but remember that every step you take is a step towards improving your health!

Safety is important!

Stay alert. Avoid dark areas and overgrown trails. Use crosswalks or intersections when crossing the street. Wear reflective clothing or carry a flashlight when walking early in the morning or at night.

1. www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/walking/call-to-action/pdf/employers.pdf

Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!
HOLIDAY
Challenge



Holiday Walking Challenge

WEEK 2

Welcome to week two of the Holiday Walking Challenge! Walking is a low impact activity that is not only good for your joint health, but also helps to relieve stress, reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and increase your ability to focus. Keep up the good work by taking steps to better health.

"The groundwork for all happiness is good health."

-Leigh Hunt

STEP OUT

Now that walking is a part of your daily routine, it is time to step out and explore different places to be physically active. Here are some ideas for walking in familiar or new places.

ENJOY THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE OUTDOORS

Parks, greenways, and trails are excellent places for walking. These places are usually free, accessible, and provide a place to walk outdoors. To find accessible trails near you, visit www.AmericanTrails.org.



USE PUBLIC COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Walking tracks at a school or gym are great places to walk. There is no need to cross streets or wait for traffic lights. Check out your local schools and see if there are walking tracks open and available for public use. Your faith community is a great place to walk as well. Consider walking outside in the parking lot or indoors if the weather is bad.

DON'T LET BAD WEATHER SLOW YOU DOWN

Walk in a mall or a covered shopping center. Mall walking is a great indoor option as malls are free and accessible. If traveling is not an option, search Youtube for indoor walking videos.

TRAVEL THE WORLD WITH A VIRTUAL WALKING RACE

Is there a place in the world that is important to your faith community? Consider challenging yourself and others to pick a city in the world, determine the number of miles between your community and that city, and then walk the number of miles it would take to reach the chosen destination. For instance, every 20 minutes of walking can count as one mile. Chart your miles and see how long it takes to "travel" to that destination.

Consider the weather

- Wear weather-appropriate clothing. For sunny days, don't forget to wear sunscreen on skin exposed to the sun. Wear sunglasses or a hat.
- For colder weather, wear a middle layer to insulate the heat. Microfiber fleece or wool are also good choices for warmth. Jackets with hoods will keep you dry on drizzly days, and don't forget your hat and scarf to retain the heat around your head and neck. You may also need mittens or gloves to keep your hands and fingers warm.

Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!

HOLIDAY
Challenge



Holiday Walking Challenge

WEEK 3

"Walking is the rhythm of life."

—Gary Snyder

Congratulations on making it halfway through the Walking Challenge. This week we challenge you to step up the intensity or duration of your daily walk. Brisk walking is an excellent aerobic workout that reduces the risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.¹

STEP IT UP

Think about your walking pace over the last two weeks and look at the descriptions below. Is your pace a stroll, a brisk walk, or a power walk?

STROLL

This is a casual slow walking pace when you barely exert yourself. At this pace, you can breathe without effort while holding a conversation.

BRISK WALK

This is a faster pace when you are walking quickly and moderately exerting yourself. At this pace, you can carry on a conversation, but you may start to breathe a little heavier and need to catch your breath throughout the conversation.

POWER WALK

This is a high-intensity pace when you are heavily exerting yourself. At this pace, you may be able to say a couple of words between breaths, but holding a conversation will be very difficult.

Here are some tips for increasing intensity and duration of your daily walk.

- Increase your pace slowly and gradually.
- Begin walking faster, going further, and taking longer walks.
- Park farther from your destination.
- Take the stairs.
- Use a pedometer or phone app to track your steps or calculate miles, and strive to keep achieving new goals.
- Walk most days of the week. If you cannot schedule longer walks, take several shorter walks of at least 10 minutes each during the day.
- To get the most substantial benefits, aim to walk briskly for at least 150 minutes a week.²

Recommendations adapted from:

1. Williams PT & Thompson PD. Walking versus running for hypertension, cholesterol, and diabetes mellitus risk reduction. *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology*, 2013; 33:4.
2. United States Department of Health and Human Services. 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2018. Accessed at health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf on Feb 6, 2024.
3. Cleveland Clinic. Here's How to Prevent Dehydration. 2023. Accessed at: my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9013-dehydration on Feb 5, 2024.

Stay hydrated

Replacing water in the body lost during exercise will help you avoid dehydration. Water is the best drink before and after your walk. Drink at least 2 cups of water before an activity and 2-3 cups of water after you are finished with the activity.³

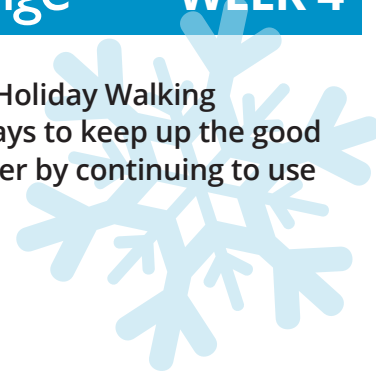
Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!

HOLIDAY
Challenge



Holiday Walking Challenge

WEEK 4



Way to go! You have almost completed the Holiday Walking Challenge. During this last week, think of ways to keep up the good work even after the Walking Challenge is over by continuing to use the tips you have learned along the way.

"Walking is a man's best medicine."

-Hippocrates

STAY MOTIVATED

It's important to stay motivated as you continue to take steps to improve and maintain your health. Here are some tips and resources to keep you walking all year long.

- Set up walking groups, buddy systems, and other forms of social support for walking so you have multiple opportunities to walk each week.¹ Your faith community can be a great source of support.
- Develop a walking map or guide at your community. Consider mapping out routes around your community or finding out how many laps it would take to complete a mile in a local community parking lot.
- Create a walking path or trail at your organization.
- Make walking a routine activity by putting it on your calendar.
- Partner with a school or local community center to establish a shared use policy and promote walking programs. The resources below can help you to learn more about this work.
- Develop a stairwell policy to promote walking instead of elevator use in your community. The resources to the left can help you to learn more about this work.
- Track your progress and celebrate your successes. Look at your Walking Challenge log and see how far you have come. Give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done!
- Now that you have completed the challenge, we encourage you to let us know how it went by filling out a brief survey.



For resources to create an environment that promotes physical activity, visit:

Move More Walking Map Guide
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/WalkingMapGuide/WalkingMapGuide.html

Move More Stairwell Guide
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/StairwellGuide/StairwellGuide.html

Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities
www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/walking/call-to-action/index.htm

Recommendations adapted from:

1. United States Department of Health & Human Services. Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities. 2022. Accessed at cdc.gov/physicalactivity/walking/call-to-action/index.htm on Feb 6, 2024.

Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!
HOLIDAY
Challenge