



Taking a step in the right direction

Walking is the most popular form of physical activity for Canadians. It can be done by anyone, at any age and at little or no cost.

Walking clubs or groups are a great way to meet other active people, stay fit and discover safe new places to walk in your neighbourhood. Some clubs are more formal while others are informal – just a group of friends who agree to walk together and motivate each other. Some are indoors, others are outdoors.

You may already have a walking club in your area. Call your local community centre or municipal information line to locate the walking groups near you. If you can't find a group you're interested in, start finding like-minded people who are enthusiastic about starting one with you. Here are some tips to get you started.

Getting Prepared

- Set up a contact list
- Name your club or group
- Promote your club or group with a flyer, poster, newspaper article
- Make hats or t-shirts for members
- Collect optional fees if required (for clothing, refreshments, etc)
- Plan the walks (create an activity calendar and choose a leader for each activity)

Choose your route:

- Is it a suitable terrain?
- Is it a suitable distance?
- Are there washrooms, benches, parking available?
- Know your route and have emergency numbers and phone available

Getting Going

- Welcome members when they arrive. Give them a warm greeting. This will help create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and make them feel welcome.
- Registration – get contact information for any new members and keep logs of those who walk.
- Make sure no one feels isolated during the walk and that members are walking at their own comfortable pace. Become familiar with the abilities of each member to help you keep track of how everyone is doing.
 - Warm up – walk slowly for the first five minutes
 - Stretch – do light stretching
 - Walk briskly – use the talk test to check your intensity
 - Light intensity – I can talk and sing
 - Moderate intensity – I can't sing but I can talk
 - Vigorous intensity – I can't talk
 - Cool down – walk slowly for the last five minutes
 - Stretches – do slow long stretches, hold them for 20 seconds each
- Complete the walk with refreshments, socializing and/or other special guests.
- Have a healthy snack available. Try rotating who will bring the snacks. Make it fun and bring new recipes and ideas. Challenge participants to include a minimum of two food groups from Canada's Food Guide to healthy eating.
- Have water available. Encourage everyone to bring a water bottle.



CHECKLIST

Take a Step Towards a Safe Walk

- ✓ Wear reflective clothing
- ✓ Walk against traffic
- ✓ Use designated sidewalks and paths
- ✓ Dress appropriately for the weather
- ✓ Bring water and a snack

Dress for Success

Winter

- ✓ Dress in layers – wind breaker, fleece, turtleneck, warm jacket, toque, scarf, gloves/mitts; warm pants and long underwear
- ✓ Comfortable winter boots/shoes
- ✓ Sunscreen, SPF 15+, UVA and UVB
- ✓ Sunglasses

Summer

- ✓ Wear loose fitting, light coloured, tightly-woven clothing (long sleeves and pants to protect from the sun and mosquitoes)
- ✓ Choose breathable fabrics and comfortable shoes
- ✓ Sunglasses and sunscreen, SPF 15+, UVA and UVB
- ✓ Hat to protect face and neck from skin damage

Motivate to Participate

- ✓ Invite guest speakers
- ✓ Offer refreshments
- ✓ Invite members to share stories and successes
- ✓ If walking indoors, play music
- ✓ Award door prizes for bringing new members

The Perfect Fit for Every Fitness

- ✓ Start slow. Begin at a slow and easy pace. As you progress, gradually increase your speed.
- ✓ Pump your arms.
- ✓ Once you are comfortable, progress to more difficult terrains that include more hills.
- ✓ Encourage participants to go at their own pace. Make sure everyone knows the route so you all have a final destination point.

Monitor the Changes in your Health

- ✓ Increase in energy
- ✓ Decrease in stress
- ✓ Ability to walk longer or faster
- ✓ Improved heart rate, blood pressure, cholesterol level
- ✓ Increase in your daily steps. Use a pedometer to track your progress.

A special thanks to our partners:

