

Walking Program Toolkit for the Workplace



Getting Healthy Starts Here:
A guide to building walking
programs in your workplace

GetHealthy Washoe.Com



Walking Tool Kit

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Chapter One

Why Walk?

Rational for Walking Programs

The workplace is a key component of improving the health of our community. Most adults spend more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else, making it an important place to promote healthy habits. Worksite culture and environment are powerful influences on behavior and can be a tool to assist employees in adopting a healthier lifestyle. Healthier employees are a benefit to employers because they are more productive and have fewer health care costs.

While a walking program is not a comprehensive worksite wellness program, it is a great place to start. Walking programs address physical activity, which is one of the three risk factors contributing to chronic disease, the other two being nutrition and tobacco use. Addressing these factors is important because chronic diseases make up four of the top five leading causes of death in our community (see table below). By addressing the risk factors leading to chronic disease, we can reduce the morbidity and mortality caused by these diseases.

Top 10 Leading Causes of Death, Washoe County, Nevada, and United States, 2012

Cause of Death	Washoe County Age adjusted death rate*	Nevada Age adjusted death rate*	United States Age adjusted death rate*
1. Heart disease	226.6	189.2	170.5
2. Cancer	174.5	160.8	166.5
3. Chronic lower respiratory disease	51.8	51.9	41.5
4. Stroke	38.0	33.5	36.9
5. Accidents	39.4	61.9	39.1
6. Suicide	17.5	17.5	12.6
7. Influenza and pneumonia	18.3	18.8	16.1
8. Septicemia	14.1	10.0	10.3
9. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	18.5	12.6	9.9
10. Diabetes	19.0	15.6	21.2

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report in 2002 revealed that at worksites with physical activity programs, employers have:

- ✚ Reduced healthcare costs by 20% – 55%
- ✚ Reduced short-term sick leave from 38% - 32%
- ✚ Increased productivity by 50% - 52%

Additional data on employee health shows that \$5.6 billion could be saved when it comes to treating heart disease (the leading cause of death in the U.S.) if just 10% of Americans began a regular walking program.

The health benefits of walking

- ✚ Reduces the risk of coronary heart disease
- ✚ Lowers blood pressure
- ✚ Reduces high cholesterol
- ✚ Reduces body fat
- ✚ Assists in controlling body weight
- ✚ Makes you feel good

Walking is exercise made easy

- ✚ It can be done anywhere at any time
- ✚ People can walk indoors or out
- ✚ It is FREE
- ✚ No equipment is needed to walk
- ✚ It is a great way to spend time with your friends and co-workers

Quotes from Participants

One local company found a great amount of support for their walking program from employees to management

- ✚ “Information and data gathered from our walking program helped us garner support for our current comprehensive workplace wellness program.”
~ Manager

- ✚ “I was amazed. We were able to get 50% of our employees to actively participate in the walking program. It just took a little bit of prep work and organization. As soon as employees knew they had someone to walk with and a competition to win, they were very motivated.”
~ Employee that organized a walking program

- ✚ "Since participating in the walking programs for the last couple of years, I notice that it motivates me to walk more. I get outside in the fresh air more often and it gives me a goal to reach, which makes it challenging and fun."
~ 39 year old participant

- ✚ "I'm not an athletic person, but this has motivated me to think about the importance of daily exercise".
~ 28 year old participant

✚ "Thank you. I have to let you know what this program has done for me personally. Since I started, I have increased my walking by over double. My grandson and I take walks at night, I park much farther away when I'm shopping, and I use my treadmill much more. I try to challenge myself each day to have more steps than the day before. I really want to thank you for letting us participate in this program."

~56 year old participant

✚ "I'm really having fun taking part in the walking challenge. It is nice to get away from my desk, be outside and enjoy the company of my coworkers."

~ 33 year old participant

Chapter Two

Getting Started

Getting Buy-in from Stakeholders

Having the support of the project's stakeholders is key to a successful walking program. Basic steps to educating and creating support for a new walking program are:

- ✚ Determine who the stakeholders in your organization are. If management is the group that is interested in starting a walking program for employees, the stakeholders who need to be included are employees. If employees are the group promoting a walking program, supervisors and management are the stakeholders

- ✚ Present stakeholders information and materials that educate them about what a walking program is and how it is going to be a benefit to them and the company or organization as an entity. Some of this information can be found in the following sections

- ✚ Ask for input and advice from stakeholders and include them in the planning and implementation process

Tips for getting support and buy-in

- ✚ Offer incentives for people to participate in your walking program
- ✚ Improvement in health and mood will make people want to participate
- ✚ The money that is saved in health care costs is a great way to influence management to implement the program
- ✚ People will socialize and improve their mood while walking with each other
- ✚ Physical activity during the work day increases productivity. Even if not on work time, employees can be encouraged to walk on breaks, at lunch, before or after work, or on off-work hours

Determine the Target Audience

- ✚ Decide which group of people you want to participate in your program. For example, are you going to open the program to all employees, or start with a small pilot group?
- ✚ Get to know this population so that you can create a program that will appeal to them. For example, find out the best time, location, and structure for your target audience. Will they be more likely to participate if there is a "challenge" or competition involved? Do they prefer to walk as individuals or in teams?

Planning the Program

Decide what type of program to implement

- ✚ Some programs focus primarily on walking at work (during breaks and lunch) and others encourage walking outside of work time as well
- ✚ A competition to see what person or group can log the most steps or the most time/distance walking (If steps are tracked participants will need pedometers)
- ✚ Planned or organized walks vs. individuals walking on their own
- ✚ Ideas for walking can include:
 - ✚ A fundraiser for a local charity (walk-a-thon)
 - ✚ A dog walk
 - ✚ A nature walk
 - ✚ A pre-determined path around the job site

Decide where you want to hold your program (a location where people will enjoy walking and/or a location that is accessible to the worksite)

- ✚ In a community park
- ✚ The local school track
- ✚ In a nearby neighborhood
- ✚ In or around a parking lot
- ✚ An indoor alternative or backup is good to have when weather does not permit walking outdoors

Decide when to hold your program

- ✚ When organizing walks, choose a time that is convenient for your participants
- ✚ It may be better to start the program during the spring when people would like to be outdoors more

Branding the Program

- ✚ A clever name, slogan or logo helps to brand your program and can motivate people to participate
- ✚ Get together with a group and brainstorm ideas for the program name or hold a contest to name the program
- ✚ Keep the target population in mind when coming up with a name
- ✚ Come up with something that will get people interested in participating

Examples of program logos:

The Heel-Toe Express



Washoe's Walking Program



Chapter Three

The Program

Kicking Off the Walking Program

- ✚ Plan an event to launch the program
- ✚ Implement an incentive program. These incentives may be purchased by your organization or donated. Incentives can include prizes for participation, completion or competitions. They can be anything that might motivate employees to participate like pedometers, t-shirts, lunch bags, i-pods, etc. Many programs choose incentives that help the employee be healthy (i.e. an employee can bring a lunch in the lunch bag vs. buying fast food)
- ✚ Plan to reward participants for the most steps each day, week, or month
- ✚ Consider allowing longer breaks for employees who take that time to walk
- ✚ Team competitions can motivate groups
- ✚ Set step goals with different rewards for achieving individual goals
- ✚ Give participants tools and encouragement:
 - The RTC SMART TRIPS program has a web-based trip matching service that can help employees locate walking buddies for various trips at www.rtcwashoe.greenride.com



Safety First

Help to keep employees safe by educating them about the following safety advice:

Personal Safety

- ✚ Be aware of your surroundings at all times, and walk in familiar, well-lit areas
- ✚ Make walking fun and safe by walking with a co-worker or in a group
- ✚ Be prepared for weather by using sunscreen, and dressing in layers as appropriate. In wet or snowy conditions make sure walking shoes have a good grip to avoid slipping
- ✚ Start slowly, gradually adding minutes and speed as you feel more comfortable.
- ✚ Drink plenty of water before, during and after walking
- ✚ To avoid injury stretch when your body is warmed up. A good walking routine looks like this: warm-up, stretch, walk briskly, cool-down, and stretch again
- ✚ Practice correct posture by keeping your head upright, and arms bent at the elbow and swinging as you stride

Walking Etiquette – The polite way to walk with traffic, and keeps pedestrians safe!

- ✚ Follow pedestrian traffic rules like using crosswalks and sidewalks when available and following traffic signals.
- ✚ Stop and look before crossing a street. It is safer to cross at an intersection than mid-block, even if there is no crosswalk
- ✚ If sidewalks paths are not available stay on the shoulder and always walk facing traffic.
- ✚ Wear light colored or reflective clothes so that drivers can see you.
- ✚ If using a track follow the posted track direction and be aware of which lanes are for walkers and which are for runners.
- ✚ It is best to avoid listening to music while you walk so you can hear traffic noises, other pedestrians, bicyclists or pets.

Sample Materials and Forms

Information available in this section

- ✚ Pedometers
- ✚ Walking contracts
- ✚ Activity equivalence list
- ✚ Monthly activity log

Pedometers

A pedometer senses body motion and counts footsteps. This count is converted into distance by knowing the length of a person's usual stride. Wearing a pedometer and recording daily steps and distance is a great personal motivator. A pedometer can be worn all day, every day and record total steps, or it can be worn just during a walking workout. A common goal is for an individual to reach 10,000 steps per day. Prices of pedometers vary widely and may measure more than just steps (calories, distance, etc). Research is recommended to find a pedometer that will meet the program's needs.



Walking Contract

For many people a contract can be a way in which they commit to an activity. Whether participants turn their contract in or keep it for motivation and reminders, it can be a great way to encourage people to take the leap into a new activity such as a walking program.

Walking Contract



Setting a goal to make physical activity part of your daily routine will help you to be successful. Choose a goal that is challenging for you, but not so challenging that you won't achieve it. If it's unattainable, you will get discouraged.

Post your goal in a visible place, such as on your refrigerator or at your desk at work. This keeps the goal in front of you and will let others know what you're working toward. **When you reach your goal, reward yourself!** Use the "Contract" below.

I _____ agree to begin taking steps. The goals I will reach by ____/____/____ are:

- I will walk _____ times per week
- I will take _____ steps each day
- I will log the number of steps I take daily
- I will report my steps to the program coordinator

This goal is challenging but reachable, and I willingly accept the challenge.

When reaching this goal I will reward myself by: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Remember, once you reach a goal, set a new one!

Activity Equivalence List

Use the following to estimate the number of **Steps Per Minute** for other activities

Activity	Equivalent steps per minute
Walking leisurely	31
Walking at a normal pace	100
Weight lifting (arms only)	42
Weightlifting (shoulders or abs)	69
Weightlifting (back only)	80
Running a 9-minute mile	184
Running a 6-minute mile	247
Stair climbing at 26 stairs a minute	90
Stair climbing at 52 stairs a minute	180
Stair climbing at 78 stairs a minute	267
Swimming, treading water	49
Swimming a breast stroke at 2 MPH	178
Swimming a crawl stroke at 2 mph	156
Swimming a backstroke at 2 MPH	196
Cycling at 5.5 MPH	51
Cycling at 10 MPH	93
Cycling, racing competitively	160
Horseback riding, trotting	102
Tennis, competitive doubles	102
Water skiing	104
Basketball, playing recreationally	129
Boxing, non-competitively	131
Racquetball, playing recreationally	136
Aerobic dancing (strenuously)	140
Aerobic dancing, low impact	118
Canoeing leisurely	49
Mopping floors	51
Gardening, weeding (seated, kneeling)	73
Ice skating leisurely	84
Soccer, recreational	144
Mountain climbing	153
Skipping rope, 120-170 turns/min	167

Info from www.walk4life.com

MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG		MONTH:							
NAME:		PHONE:							
		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	WEEKLY TOTAL
WEEK 1	# OF STEPS								
WEEK 2	# OF STEPS								
WEEK 3	# OF STEPS								
WEEK 4	# OF STEPS								
WEEK 5	# OF STEPS								
MONTHLY TOTAL _____									

Congratulations!!

*You have just finished recording the number of steps for your first month!
Now, challenge your friends/co-workers/family to count their steps as well. Try to reach 10,000 steps per day. (Remember, it gets easier each and every day.)*

MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG		MONTH:							
NAME:		PHONE:							
		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	WEEKLY TOTAL
WEEK 1	# OF STEPS								
WEEK 2	# OF STEPS								
WEEK 3	# OF STEPS								
WEEK 4	# OF STEPS								
WEEK 5	# OF STEPS								
MONTHLY TOTAL _____									

Congratulations!!

*How do you feel now that you have completed another month?
Have your friends and family taken up the challenge?*

Chapter Four

Evaluation

Measuring Program Effectiveness

Why evaluate?

- ✚ All programs need to be evaluated to reflect effectiveness of the program and show direction for the program in the future
- ✚ Program evaluation can be used to:
 - ✚ Influence policy makers
 - ✚ Influence stakeholders
 - ✚ Influence funding
 - ✚ Ensure program sustainability
 - ✚ Motivate participants and planners (let everyone know how they did!)
 - ✚ Expand program

How to evaluate

- ✚ Compare results of a pre-test with results from a post-test (see samples below)
- ✚ Use an online survey to gather feedback and information
- ✚ Gather program feedback from participants through interviews or focus groups
- ✚ Ask participants what they enjoyed most about the program
- ✚ Ask participants what they disliked about the program
- ✚ Find out what the participants would like to see done differently in the program
- ✚ Compare the number of participants that completed the program with the number that started it



Modifying the Program to Meet the Needs of a Target Population

Using this information from the evaluation, make the necessary changes to improve your program for future implementation

- ✚ Do you need different incentives?
- ✚ Do you need to change the location or activities?
- ✚ Does the target population need to be changed?
- ✚ Do you need to change the marketing of the activities?

Sample Evaluation Tools

Evaluation tools

-  Program pre-tests
-  Program post-tests



Pre-test

Congratulations! By participating in this walking program you have made a step towards better health!

Please complete and return this survey to your coordinator before you begin the program. The information provided will help us evaluate the walking program. You do not need to include your name. Thanks!

1. In general please rate your overall health. ***Please Circle one***

Excellent Good Fair Poor

2. During the past seven days, how many times did you do exercise that was moderately intense (things like running, biking, swimming or aerobics), for a period of time longer than 30 minutes? ***Please check one***

0 times
 1 times
 2 times
 3 times

4 times
 5 times
 6 times
 7 times or more

3. Have you ever used a pedometer to track the number of steps you take?

Yes No

4. When you exercise, do you usually exercise with: ***Please check one***

One other person
 A group (2 or more people)

By yourself
 Other _____

5.a. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects your current exercise level? **Please circle only one statement**

- a. I do not exercise or walk regularly, but I have been thinking about starting.
- b. I have been trying to start to exercise or walk for the last month.
- c. I exercise or walk about 4-5 times per month.
- d. I am doing vigorous or moderate exercise less than 3 times per week (things like biking, running/walking, swimming, aerobics or other sports for at least 30 minutes each time)
- e. I am doing vigorous or moderate exercise 3 to 5 times per week (things like biking, running/walking, swimming, aerobics or other sports for at least 30 minutes each time)
- f. I am doing vigorous or moderate exercise 6 or more times per week (things like biking, running/walking, swimming, aerobics or other sports for at least 30 minutes each time)

5.b. How long have you exercised at this level? **Please check one**

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 7-12 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 1 year |

6. What is your primary purpose for participating in the walking program? Please check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving health | <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing physical activity/exercise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motivation/Fun | <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To meet new people | <input type="checkbox"/> To try a new physical activity/exercise routine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addressing a specific health concern. Please identify (i.e. blood pressure, cholesterol, arthritis): _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list) _____ | |

THANK YOU!

Post-Test

Please return the completed survey to your coordinator upon completion of the program. The information below will be used for evaluation purposes only. You do not need to include your name. Thanks!

1.a. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects your current exercise level? **Please circle only one statement**

- a. I do not exercise or walk regularly, but I have been thinking about starting.
- b. I have been trying to start to exercise or walk for the last month.
- c. I exercise or walk about 4-5 times per month.
- d. I am doing vigorous or moderate exercise less than 3 times per week (things like biking, running/walking, swimming, aerobics or other sports for at least 30 minutes each time)
- e. I am doing vigorous or moderate exercise 3 to 5 times per week (things like biking, running/walking, swimming, aerobics or other sports for at least 30 minutes each time)
- f. I am doing vigorous or moderate exercise 6 or more times per week (things like biking, running/walking, swimming, aerobics or other sports for at least 30 minutes each time)

1.b. How long have you exercised at this level? **Please check one**

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 7-12 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 1 year |

2. In general, please rate your health. **Please circle one**

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

3. During the past seven days, how many times did you do exercise that was moderately intense (things like running, biking, swimming or aerobics), for a period of time longer than 30 minutes? **Please check one**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 times | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 times | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 times | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 times or more |

4.a. How did using the pedometer impact the amount of time you spent walking or exercising? **Please check only one statement**

- I walk or exercise less
- I walk or exercise the same
- I walk or exercise more

4.b. In your own words, how did using the pedometer impact the amount of time you spent walking or exercising?

5. Do you plan to continue using the pedometer? YES NO

6. Did you experience any changes in your health or behaviors as a result of the program?

Please check all that apply

- Improved overall health Increased the amount of physical activity I do
- Motivated me to walk Weight loss-how much _____
- Helped me to meet new people Change in physical activity routine
- Improved a specific health problem Reduced body fat-how much_____ Please identify (i.e. blood pressure, cholesterol or arthritis)_____
- Other (please list) _____

7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for improving the program?

Chapter Five

Other Wellness Program Components

This section provides information on components of a comprehensive workplace wellness program besides physical activity.

Smoking Cessation and Tobacco Prevention

Eliminating tobacco use and exposure in the workplace is the single most impactful step an employer can take to improve employee health and productivity. The Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act banned smoking in all indoor places of employment, with few exceptions. However, there is still more employers can do.

Additional steps business can take are:

- ✚ Banning all tobacco use (including smokeless tobacco) on their entire property (even outside spaces) and in their vehicles and other equipment
- ✚ Provide resources like written materials, cessation classes & information on programs in the community, and encourage employees to use these resources
- ✚ In addition to resources listed below, doctors are also great resources. There are nicotine replacement therapies available that may help
- ✚ Visit GetHealthyWashoe.com for more information on tobacco prevention, information on the Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act and resources

Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Resources

- ✚ **Get Healthy Washoe Website**
www.gethealthywashoe.com
- ✚ **Nevada Tobacco Quitline**
1 (800) QUIT NOW (784-8669)
www.nevadatobaccoquitline.com
- ✚ **American Lung Association**
www.lung.org
- ✚ **American Cancer Society**
www.cancer.org
- ✚ **Become An Ex**
www.becomeanex.org

Eating Healthy

Healthy eating, combined with physical activity, can help employees maintain a healthy weight and help prevent chronic disease. Employers can institute small changes that will encourage and support employees in making healthier choices.

- # Provide healthy choices at employee social events.
- # Select healthy choices for the vending machines.
- # Encourage employees to bring healthy options in addition to any “unhealthy” treats they bring in to share at work. Institute a “Junk Food Free” meeting policy
- # Reduce seasonal or holiday “grazing” by picking just one day during the season for a potluck or celebration. Encourage healthy options at the celebration.
- # Post information about healthy eating, such as [Choose MY PLATE](#) in break rooms and other communal spaces

Healthy Eating and Nutrition Resources

- # **Get Healthy Washoe website**
www.gethealthywashoe.com
- # **Dietary Guidelines for Americans**
<https://health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/>
- # **Center for Nutrition Policy & Promotion**
<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp>

Supporting Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is not only good for babies but for mothers, fathers, other family members and employers.

Benefits to Employers:

- # Cost savings of \$3 per \$1 invested in breastfeeding support
- # Less illness among the breastfed children of employees
- # Reduced absenteeism to care for ill children
- # Lower health care costs (an average of \$400 per baby over the first year)
- # Improved ability to attract and retain valuable employees
- # Higher morale and greater loyalty
- # Improved employee productivity
- # Family-friendly image in the community

Find out more about the [Business Case for Breastfeeding](#) and how to create a breastfeeding friendly workplace.

Influencing Change

- ✦ A walking program is a great way to influence healthy behaviors at the workplace and can be a starting point for more comprehensive workplace wellness programs and policies
- ✦ Implementing policies in the workplace is an effective way to influence change (i.e. policies mandating healthy options in vending machines, a smoke-free workplace policy, etc)
- ✦ A comprehensive workplace wellness plan can improve the overall wellness of employees by not only offering services related to nutrition, physical activity and tobacco, but also addressing issues related to mental health such as stress and family dynamics. A company can offer a continuum of options as part of a workplace wellness program
- ✦ Employees can be motivated by incentives at many levels, from movie tickets for completing a program to health insurance discounts for healthy lifestyles
- ✦ A change in healthier employees at one worksite can have big implications, including healthier families and communities!