

STEP BY STEP:

# A WORKPLACE WALKING RESOURCE



WalkBC

[www.walkbc.ca](http://www.walkbc.ca)



*This Walking Resource Guide is a resource of the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA). Several of the resource materials contained in this resource were adapted from existing BCRPA resources.*

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An initiative of these BC Healthy Living Alliance members



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# INTRODUCTION

This toolkit has been designed to assist organizations to implement walking programs. Whether you are a big or small workplace, or whether you have a workplace health program or not, you will find all sorts of information to get your workplace walking.

Workplace walking can range from simple walking initiatives needing minimal resources (e.g., Move for Health Day walking event), to more detailed ones requiring a greater number of resources and supports (e.g., workplace walking program with tracking component and special events to promote the program). Every workplace is different in terms of the type of work employees do, number of employees, capacity to implement walking initiatives, and interest in walking initiatives among the employees. You will need to decide what resources you need to get walking in your organization. When it comes to designing and delivering walking initiatives, one size does not fit all.

The toolkit is organized into the 6 following sections:

## 1. Paving the Way

This section contains all the information you need to lay the foundation for your walking initiatives.

## 2. Taking Stock

Working your way through this section will enable you to build on what is already in place and avoid certain pitfalls!

## 3. Walking it Through: Making a Plan

Before starting any walking activities it is important to have a plan. This section provides some tips for making a plan for your workplace walking initiative.

## 4. Now You're Walking

Here you will find all sorts of ideas for walking activities to get your workplace walking.

## 5. Talking the Walk: Spreading the Word

You'll want to spread the word about walking and the various opportunities you have created.

This section has promotional materials that you will find useful to support your workplace initiative.

## 6. Walk On: Engagement, Motivation & Quality Assurance

Once your walking activities are underway, you will want to develop some strategies to motivate people to continue walking and track how well the walking initiatives are doing.

## 7. Resources

On the CD at the back of this book you will find the resources you need to support your efforts.

As a key stakeholder, you likely know your workplace best and also know what resources are available to you to implement your workplace walking initiatives. As you move through the sections of this toolkit you will see that where applicable, we provide two options for you to choose from:

### *A WALK IN THE PARK*

This option is for workplaces which have some degree of resources but may lack a detailed budget or person to organize initiatives, and/or are limited by the physical environment of the workplace. It is intended to help you launch relatively simple and straightforward walking initiatives without a lot of fuss.

### *POWER WALKING*

This is the option for workplaces with greater resources (in the form of more money, time, people and/or physical environments) that make it easy to start a walking program (e.g., buildings with safe and accessible staircases, or that are near walking paths or parks etc.). It is intended to help you implement a more comprehensive walking initiative that requires more attention and resources.

Whatever your approach, you are on the right track to start "walking the talk".

We rely on people for the ongoing operation of our business whether it is large or small. It makes good business sense to invest in keeping our people healthy and happy. Workplace walking is an important strategy that benefits both the employee and the employer.

# PAVING THE WAY



## Building Support

Building support for your workplace walking initiative is essential and the first place to start. There are three key groups that need to be involved in this process: champions, management, and employees.

### CHAMPIONS

All it takes is one keen individual who can spark enthusiasm among employees and management. This person becomes the leader encouraging management and others within the workplace to get on board. Without this energy and enthusiasm it is not easy to establish commitment within the workplace and move forward with walking activities.

#### A WALK IN THE PARK

- The amount of time this person is able to dedicate to activities is dependent on support of management and resources allocated to the project. If you have limited resources or time, simplify your efforts and choose one walking initiative to start.

#### POWER WALKING

- The amount of time required to implement comprehensive workplace walking activities and programs should not be underestimated. If you have dedicated time (management has allocated time for the position of champion/coordinator), a team of colleagues to help you, and a budget to work with, choose a variety of walking initiatives to get you underway.
- Establish a workplace walking committee to work with you and guide the workplace walking initiatives (or use your existing healthy workplace committee).

There are a few things to think about:

- The size of the committee is usually dependent on the size of the workplace. It is important to have representation from all workplace groups on the committee (management, all levels of employees, different departments, union representation if applicable).
- Committees generally meet once every 1 or 2 months. Their involvement may be greater at the onset of your planning.

- The committee may already exist (particularly if there is a workplace health program in place) or you may need to create new one.
- The committee must have the capacity (time, money and authority) to undertake the planning and implementation of activities, otherwise the process is frustrating for all.
- Remember, committee members will be ambassadors for the walking initiatives and it is important to recruit individuals that are well respected in the organization and have the talents to fulfill their function.
- You may find it useful to document the roles of the committee and the expectations of committee members.

### MANAGEMENT

It is absolutely vital to establish commitment from management. Walking initiatives that are supported by management have a far greater likelihood of being successful with greater employee participation than those that do not. It is important for management to be openly seen as supporting walking initiatives.

#### A WALK IN THE PARK

- Approach management with your idea to get walking going in the workplace.
- Make sure management understands the reasons for, and benefits of, walking initiatives. Identify what is in it for the organization and its people. The Resource Section of this toolkit contains a Business Case, take what works for you and use it to build your argument.
- Ask members of the management team what they think would work in terms of walking initiatives and in what ways the company is able to provide support (if any).
- Ask management to send a note to employees indicating their support of walking initiatives. See the prepared note in the Resource Section of this toolkit.

## POWER WALKING

- Arrange a meeting to formally present the business case. See the Business Case in the Resource Section of this toolkit.
- You may wish to formalize your agreement, with a Workplace Charter Agreement which can be found in the Resource Section of this toolkit.
- Ensure that you discuss the issue of resources for the workplace walking initiatives. Resources include funds as well as time for the champion to coordinate and administer activities. Without this support, it is not possible to move forward with more detailed workplace walking initiatives. You will need to have a clear indication of your budget.

## EMPLOYEES

It is important that your walking initiatives are designed to meet the interests and needs of the employees. After all, that is who they are for! Employees are the cornerstone of any walking activity or program so it makes good sense to ensure employees are involved in planning from the very beginning. Consulting with employees has numerous benefits which include increasing the likelihood of your program making a difference, increasing employee involvement, and the additional benefit of establishing benchmarks for tracking purposes.

## A WALK IN THE PARK

- Involve employees in the initial discussions and brainstorming about what kinds of walking initiatives are of interest to the group, how activities might be introduced and who might be involved. This consultation ensures that the walking activities and programs are relevant to those who you want to participate. This involvement does not have to be done formally through a survey or a group meeting; you can have conversations over the water cooler, during lunch, after meetings, or whenever you come in contact with other employees. A few things to think about:
  - Try to involve a range of employees from all walks of life and ask them to identify their current thoughts around walking, ideas and preferences.
  - You may need to provide some ideas of potential walking initiatives. See the Now You're Walking Section for a list of ideas to get you going.
  - Help employees understand the different motivations behind walking initiatives. For some employees it may be about having a better lifestyle and work-life balance. For others it may

be about getting to know other employees, while others may be interested in the environmental impact of walking to work rather than taking the car.

- While speaking with employees be sure to remember anyone that is really keen on workplace walking activities and/or program. This person(s) may be able to help you spread the word and get things going.

## POWER WALKING

- Consider distributing a survey. A survey is a great way to identify the interests and needs of the employees and can be done anonymously. Other methods include meetings with various employee groups, and one-on-one conversations with employees. A workplace walking survey can be found in the Resource Section of this toolkit.
- If a survey isn't for you, try holding focus groups (group discussion). Invite a small group of employees to discuss workplace walking. Small group discussions are meant to gather more in-depth information than surveys and have the advantage of creating momentum among discussion participants as they bounce ideas back and forth. Try no more than eight people at a time, and each discussion group should have the "same" kind of people (as it relates to their walking experiences, interests, etc).

*CD Resources for this section:*  
**Business Case**  
**Workplace Charter Agreement**



# TAKING STOCK



Your existing workplace environment will play a part in the kind of walking initiatives you choose (e.g., are there walking routes nearby, does your workplace have stairs?). This step will enable you to build on what is already in place and avoid certain pitfalls!

## A WALK IN THE PARK

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What opportunities do we have internally within our workplace to support walking initiatives? For example, does your workplace have showers or a place to get changed into walking gear, are there stairs available to promote stair walking, does your workplace have a flex time policy, how long is the lunch break?
- What are the existing programs, events or activities in your workplace and community that could support your walking initiatives? For example, do you have an annual family picnic or barbeque that you could use to kick off walking initiatives? Is there a regular monthly staff meeting?
- What other organizations/partners in our community can you ask for assistance in implementing walking initiatives? For example, is the local recreation centre interested in partnering with you on walking initiatives (e.g., providing a walk leader) and helping you tackle any walking challenges you might be facing in launching a walking initiative (e.g., helping to find walking routes)? To find out where your local recreation and parks department is visit the BCRPA Interactive Map. This excellent resource also identifies walking trails and paths around the province:  
[www.walkbc.ca/](http://www.walkbc.ca/)

## POWER WALKING

- Sit down with your committee and go through the Identifying Opportunities and Challenges Form (found in the Resources Section of this toolkit) to help you identify what will make it doable and/or difficult for walking in your workplace.
- Use the Walkability Checklist to determine how walkable the walking routes are around your workplace. Check for this list in the Resource Section of this toolkit.



# WALKING IT THROUGH: Making a Plan



You have done background work which will now pay off when creating a plan for your workplace walking initiatives.

## A WALK IN THE PARK

With limited capacity (that is if there is minimal time, people, and/or money), your workplace's contribution might be as simple as committing some time to getting started. There are no committees required, no policies to write, just a shared belief that walking activities will go a long way to improving the health and well-being of the employees at your workplace.

Your walking initiatives don't have to be complicated or formal. However, it is important to establish a clear and shared understanding throughout the organization about the direction your walking initiatives will take. This could be as simple as offering a walking event once a year, or a regular walking program - whatever works for your workplace. Choose a walking initiative that aligns with the information you have gathered and make it happen! Visit the Now You're Walking Section for all sorts of good ideas.



## POWER WALKING

The more detailed and documented your plan, the greater likelihood of success. Include some timelines and indicate who is responsible for the various walking initiatives. More often than not, the committee will generate a list of ideas that is far beyond the capacity (that is, time, people and/or money) of the organization to deliver. It is therefore important that a realistic number of walking initiatives be chosen in the first couple of years of the plan and that the balance of ideas are spread throughout future years. Also make sure you identify your expected outcomes as they relate to your goals. There are several approaches to help you prioritize your efforts:

- Consider implementing a mix of strategies for a more comprehensive workplace walking program that addresses the people in the workplace (e.g., raising awareness about the benefits of walking, offering educational sessions) as well as workplace environment (e.g., creating a walking club, working with management to offer flextime policies). You will find a number of suggestions for each of these in the Now You're Walking Section of this toolkit.
- Consider costs of the identified walking initiatives and if they align with the capacity of the organization.
- Consider whether or not the walking initiatives are accessible to the majority of staff.
- Ensure that the walking initiatives align with the needs and interests of the employees.

Although management endorsed the idea of workplace walking in your workplace, it is important to receive senior management approval for ongoing support, funding and the resources necessary to implement the plan.

*CD Resources for this section:*  
**Employee Needs and Interests Questionnaire**

# NOW YOU'RE WALKING



Most of the walking activities listed below fall into the Walk in the Park category with a few exceptions. However, many of the Walk in the Park activities can quickly become Power Walking activities when additional supports and incentives are used to enhance the activity.

## A WALK IN THE PARK

### • Walking Clubs

Start a walking group at your workplace so you and your colleagues will have an opportunity to be physically active during the workday. Many people find it hard to fit physical activity into their schedules so try going for a 10 - 20 minute brisk walk at work.

The list of reasons to walk is endless and as varied as the individuals who walk! There are many types of walking clubs or programs. Some are more organized than others, some are informal. Anything goes, as long as everyone keeps walking! Visit the Resource Section in this toolkit for more information on how to start a walking club and remember you can spice up your walking club by incorporating challenges throughout the year (e.g. See Walk "Across Canada or BC" Challenge below).

### • Walking Challenges

#### *10,000 Steps Challenge*

The 10,000 Steps Challenge is a pedometer tracking program that encourages employees to reach 10,000 steps per day/employee. Recent guidelines have stated that 10,000 steps is the recommended daily step goal for a healthy adult. The '10,000 steps' goal puts a focus on the accumulation of activity across the whole day. It is sometimes easier for people to be active when they have a motivational tool such as a pedometer reminding them of how many or how little steps they have done for the day. For information, tools, and resources to help implement a 10,000 Steps Challenge visit The Walking Site ([www.thewalkingsite.com/10000steps.html](http://www.thewalkingsite.com/10000steps.html)), 10,000 Steps ([www.10000steps.org.au/](http://www.10000steps.org.au/)) or Act Now BC at [www.actnowbc.ca/media/2Activities.pdf](http://www.actnowbc.ca/media/2Activities.pdf).

#### *Stairway to Health*

Stairway to Health is a web-based resource developed to increase physical activity in the workplace through stair climbing by the Public Health Agency of Canada. It is an interactive web resource that electronically tracks progress toward goals, provides instant feedback

and a host of resources such as downloadable posters, ideas on how to increase stair use, overcoming barriers, planning events and much, much more. The program allows individuals or workplace coordinators to select challenges such as mountains, towers or long distances and electronically track their progress. For more information visit the Stairway to Health website ([www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sth-evs/english/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sth-evs/english/index-eng.php)). This site provides everything you need to encourage employees to participate in a Stairway to Health Program.

#### *Commuter Challenge*

The goal of The Commuter Challenge is to encourage Canadians to leave their car at home and walk, cycle, take transit, carpool (ride share) or tele-work instead of driving to work alone. The National challenge is a friendly competition between communities and workplaces to see which region or workplace has the highest percent of healthy commuters during the week-long event. Prior to the event, workplaces and individuals are encouraged to pre-register for the challenge. During the challenge week, employees record their commuting behaviour on-line. Registration and logging can be done until the event is over. Results are posted daily to determine which cities and workplaces have the highest percent of healthy commuters. Canadians are able to see how a healthier commute affects greenhouse gas reductions, calories burned, kilometers and dollars saved. Visit [www.commuterchallenge.ca](http://www.commuterchallenge.ca) for more information.

#### *Walk "Across Canada or BC" Challenge*

Choose a route across Canada or BC, figure out how many steps it would take to walk that distance and challenge employees to do it. Give or loan pedometers to employees, and ask them to record the number of steps they take. Or, if you cannot afford pedometers, track the minutes walked. Set up a challenge between employees and managers to see who can walk across Canada first. Visit Act Now at [www.actnowbc.ca/media/2Activities.pdf](http://www.actnowbc.ca/media/2Activities.pdf) for resources to assist you with a walking challenge.



## • Themes and Seasonal Campaigns

Planning your promotions can tune in to seasonal cycles. In January, people think about New Year's resolutions and want to know how to get started. Pre-swimsuit season is another time when people are eager to get active. September starts the school year and is a time when families have more structured lives.

You can also tie walking events or challenges into community or workplace fundraising initiatives at certain times of the year. For example, if your organization is part of the United Way fundraising campaign, you might want to link steps accumulated during the campaign period to pledges (e.g., \$1 per 10,000 steps) for a "United We Step" challenge.

Here are some thematic and seasonal ideas to get you going:

### *In the Spring, Promote Active Commuting*

Check out the Walk and Roll Toolkit: A Guide to Active Transportation to, from and at the Workplace ([www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/gci/walknroll/wnroll.html](http://www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/gci/walknroll/wnroll.html)). The Walk and Roll toolkit is designed to encourage a shift to more active modes of transportation as a means of promoting healthier and more environmentally responsible commuting decisions. The toolkit provides inspiration, ideas and tools to design and implement strategies to support active transportation in workplaces.

### *During Winter Months, Try Active Breaks at Work*

Encourage employees to plan all kinds of "active breaks" within their day, without losing productivity. In fact, research has shown that workers who are more physically active during the day tend to be more productive. Ways to take active breaks can include: going for a short walk (inside or out) for 10 minutes; parking 10 minutes away from work and walking; conducting scheduled walking meetings vs boardroom meetings when groups are small and agenda items are clear and manageable. Getting outdoors can help people think clearly plus everyone will have a little more energy when they get back to work.

### *In the Spring, Encourage Employees to Spring into Action with Move for Health Day*

Every year, on or around May 10th, thousands of British Columbians get active by participating in Move for Health Day events. Move for Health Day is an international event created in 2002 by the World Health Organization to celebrate and promote physical activity. Move for Health Day events bring people together in a spirit of fun, inclusivity, and support of healthy active living. The workplace is an excellent place to host a walk, create a physical activity challenge or any other activity that engages people in the celebration of being active. Who knows, it is likely that your community may also be doing something, and you could partner up. BCRPA leads our province in promoting this global event and every year they track the number of British Columbians who were active through events and challenges. For more information visit: [www.bcrpa.bc.ca/mfhd](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/mfhd).

Check out the monthly theme planning ideas in the 12-Month Promotional Calendar found in the Resource Section of this toolkit.



## POWER WALKING

### • Workshops and Information Sessions

Holding a workshop can show your colleagues how to start and keep walking and let people know about your walking initiatives. A workshop can be held during work hours, before or after work, or be part of the lunch hour, depending on the support of your workplace and the type of work people do. It can be interactive. It can involve demonstrations and/or presentations on walking and getting more physically active. And it can be a lot of fun. A workshop is what you make it. Be creative! A few things to get you going:

- Create a list of workshop ideas. Think about how these ideas relate to your walking initiatives.
- Narrow your ideas down to a theme. For example: when promoting the start of a walking initiative, your workshop might be called: Walk this Way, Stepping Out, Walk-about, or Gaitkeepers. Workshops can offer information on all sorts of topics such as proper fitting shoes, how to use a pedometer, walking routes and/or create employee teams, launch a friendly worksite competition or identify walk leaders and walking routes.
- Remember! Interactive workshops are best for keeping audiences interested.
- You will be surprised how many experts from your community (or perhaps from within your workplace) would be happy to share their knowledge with your employees and often for free! Check at the local university or college, sports shop or physiotherapy clinic for potential workshop facilitators.

### • Tracking Programs

Steps Out Online Tracking Program is a unique web log-in/tracking system developed by Edis Computers of Penticton. The Steps Out tracking program allows groups to register and log their steps online. There are numerous communities, workplaces and schools around the province that have online tracking programs. "Steps Out" has a new exciting Workplace Wellness Program. Any company or group, anywhere in the world can set up their own, individualized Workplace Wellness program. The program is built so that it is easily customizable by people with average computer skills that have never done any website programming before. Visit [www.stepsout.com/](http://www.stepsout.com/) for more information and to see if there is a Steps Out program in your community.

### • Workplace Environment and Policies

#### *Make the stairwell user-friendly*

To encourage stair walking make sure the stairwells are user-friendly and safe. Work with the maintenance team at your workplace to see about proper lighting, regular cleaning, access and safety strips. Even adding music into stairwells, and artwork on the walls (e.g., by employees or their children/grandchildren) has worked to get more people using the stairs.

#### *Designate an area for a change area and a clean shower stall*

If you are fortunate enough to have showers and change areas at your workplace, make sure they are clean and useable (sometimes shower stalls become storage lockers). If you do not have actual change areas, check into the possibility of designating an area for employees to get changed into their walking gear.



### ***Work with management to implement a flex time policy***

It can be challenging for some people to walk at work if they have limited time on their breaks. Work with management to implement a flex time policy to enable people to participate in walking activities. Flex time means employees can make up time in lieu of time spent walking.

### ***Work to improve the walking routes near your workplace***

Check out the How Walkable is the Area around Your Workplace Checklist found in the Resource Section of this toolkit. Going through the checklist will provide you with some potential ideas of how you might improve the walking routes near your workplace.

### ***Ask management to consider a walking while working policy.***

While it is not always possible for employees to be walking during their entire workday, there are several opportunities during the day for employees to get out of their seats to get walking! For example, if meetings do not have a complicated agenda, suggest that employees go for a walk while brainstorming or discussing a particular topic. If a meeting is longer than 3 hours, suggest employees take a 15 minute walk break in the middle of the meeting. If management supports workplace walking during the workday, you will have much greater luck getting everyone going.

### ***Financial Assistance***

Many workplaces provide financial subsidies for fitness programs and other physical activity opportunities. Suggest to management that they consider providing subsidies to purchase pedometers, walking shoes, or gear. These items can also be considered as incentives.

### ***CD Resources for this section:***

**Starting a Walking Club**

**Health Screening Questionnaire**

**Getting Your Body Ready, Warm-Up for Walking**

**How much Walking is Enough?**

**Sport Med Walking Program**

**Walk-About**

**Barriers to Being Physically Active Quiz and Suggestions for Overcoming Physical Activity Barriers**

**Pedometers-Making Every Step Count**

**Pedometer Walking Log**

**How Walkable is the Area Around Your Workplace?**

**12 Month Calendar**

**Attendance Sheet**

**FAQ's**

**Benefits of Walking**

**Safety and Injury Prevention**

**Shoes and Gear**

**Pace and Technique**

**Sticking with Training**

**Shift Work-Getting Enough Sleep and Physical Activity**





# TALK THE WALK: Spreading the Word



The materials you will find in this section are from The Marketing Action Plan (M.A.P.). M.A.P. offers a selection of marketing tools that will be very helpful for promoting your workplace walking initiative. “Active is What You Make It” is the slogan for M.A.P. and is designed to acknowledge the barriers to physical activity by providing positive solutions. When you use these tools and templates to demonstrate simple ways to get active in daily life or to invite employees to participate in your workplace event or program, you also help to overcome the barriers many people face in getting more physically active. Just how are you going to do that? Use the templates and follow the steps outlined in the next few pages and you’ll be off and running (errr, we mean walking!).

Marketing activities to connect with your walking initiatives can include:

- promotion through posters, activity prompts, and ads
- technology
- incentives or freebies (SWAG),

## PROMOTION

### A WALK IN THE PARK

#### • Posters

The “Active Is” posters are for you to promote your walking event or program as well as the benefits of physical activity. The templates can be customized to fit your message or printed as is.

#### Customized Posters

Here is what you can do to create your poster.

- Look for these templates online at [www.walkbc.ca](http://www.walkbc.ca) to download a copy
- Choose the poster that you think best captures the attention of your employees.
- Write the content for your posters.
- Double check that you’ve included your basic information by answering the questions: What is it? When is it? Where is it? Who do you want to come? Why should they come?
- Insert your information either on your computer or simply handwrite it in on your printed poster.
- Send your posters out for printing or print your own copies.
- Hang your posters!



You can also customize the headings of your poster:

- To customize your poster, all you have to do is: choose an “Active Is\_\_\_\_\_” headline and fill in the key information about your walking event or program, or choose an “Active Is” statement (e.g., Active Is Easy, Active Is Healthy, Active Is Working Here, Active Is Walking This Way) for your headline.
- Next put the name of your event along with the information about it in the space provided in the body of the poster.



Timing is everything. In order for your posters to be effective they need to build on the right opportunity, appear at the right time and in more than one place. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to create your poster so it can be hung two to three weeks in advance. Check to make sure that your posters are not taken down before your event or program starts.

Remember! Repetition is key. Plaster posters all over the office building or workplace area. Knowing where your employees “hang out” and placing communications when and where they are sure to encounter them is key to executing a successful marketing campaign. For example, in the staff room, washrooms, coffee machine, water cooler, foyers etc.

### Activity Prompts

Activity Prompts are designed to enhance your message and to alert your employees and colleagues to the easy and different ways to add walking to their day. You don't have to do a thing to these prompts– just print and post! Activity Prompts are designed to work best in two types of places:

- A place where a person can get active right here and now (i.e. a poster with a “Take the stairs” message works by an elevator or a stairwell).
- A place where people who are inactive might frequent and be exposed to the message (i.e. by a vending machine reminding them that walking can burn off calories).

Think outside the cubicle for places to hang your posters and activity prompts – small and bigger print and digital versions:

- washroom
- elevator
- stairwell
- parking lot
- email
- company webpage
- employee paystubs (print or digital)
- nearby coffee shops
- nearby public transit stops
- staff fridge, cupboards
- table tents on staff room tables



## USING TECHNOLOGY

### POWER WALKING

#### • Set up a Website & Get Moving Online in a Few Clicks

Building and hosting a website is not as difficult as it might seem. If your company doesn't already have a website, visit [www.tripod.lycos.com](http://www.tripod.lycos.com) for step by step instructions on how to get a website up and running. Once your site is established, the resources you've developed for your promotional materials can be used for your website content, along with any photos of past events.

#### • Free and Easy Ways to get Online with your Message

Blogs and social networking sites are key ways to use the internet to get your message out in addition to, or in place of, a website.

#### *Social Networking Sites*

Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) is the most used social networking site in Canada and it is free. It is a perfect way to get online without having to create or maintain a website. You will find that there are probably a lot of employees at your workplace (or maybe even your company) on Facebook already.



Here is what you do:

- Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
- First create a profile for yourself by following the Facebook guidelines
- Next use the guidelines to create a group for your event or program. Remember to fill in the key facts about your event or program outlined in your promotional materials
- Follow the prompts to invite people to your event or program. Ask the people you invite to invite their Facebook friends too.

#### *Blogs*

A blog is a very popular form of website where you can communicate online with your colleagues on an ongoing basis. Because content can be easily changed and added, a blog makes it easy for you to keep the information about your event or program current. A blog also allows potential participants at your workplace to communicate with you. Visit [www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com), or [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) for free and easy instructions on how to create your own blog. A few things to note:

- A blog needs to be updated and added to regularly to stay dynamic and relevant. Think of it as an ongoing, real time conversation.
- Put your blog or website address in all the promotional materials that you send out to increase traffic to your website and to promote your event/program. Make sure it is functioning and up to date or don't print it!
- Google similar websites to find users that are already interested in becoming more physically active and suggest that they visit your website.
- Start building an email database for future events.

#### • Create an email newsletter or include your event/program information in your workplace email newsletter.

- Promote your event by uploading photos of previous events so people know what to expect.
- Include your contact information so people know how to reach you for more information.
- Post a schedule of upcoming or related events or programs.
- Encourage goal-setting, offer solutions to common barriers that people will face during the work week, and suggest strategies for increasing step counts.
- Include related information about the benefits of and opportunities for walking such as: "Active Is" tips for getting moving - like encouraging employees to walk to co-workers' offices instead of e-mailing or phoning.
- Highlight free or inexpensive resources in your community, including walking and trail maps.
- Remind people that Active is Fun – tell them about the fun they'll have at your event/program.
- Remind people that Active is Healthy – more energy means quality time with family, especially children!

Some keys to success on using technology:

- It's best to use the sites that your workplace typically uses to conduct work and get information - Facebook, Twitter, Friendfeed, Youtube.
- Figure out what you will use the web for:
  - Posting event or program information
  - Running a contest
  - Engaging your workplace to learn what inspires and motivates them to get active
  - Deciding how to best reach and engage your colleagues
  - Creating your own content – a blog
  - Creating a group page on Facebook to attract a wider audience and be able to share information quickly
  - Posting videos of active events to inspire new participation at the next one
- Be patient and allow time for your online marketing strategies to engage your colleagues and elicit responses. Remember that creating an online walking community takes time.

You can create more promotional materials using “Active Is”. The posters you’ve created from the “Active Is” templates are the promotional materials that can easily be turned into flyers, emails and web postings. The information you’ve gathered by answering the key questions about your event is the foundation for all your written communication.



## SWAG

“Active Is” stickers can be printed on label paper from the sticker file found at [www.walkbc.ca](http://www.walkbc.ca). Use these stickers for customizing hats, books, binders, bags, umbrellas or any of your promotional items, or as they say in the business – SWAG. You’ll also find “Active Is” logos to print for letterhead and other promotional items..



*CD Resources for this section:*

**Marketing Action Plan (M.A.P.)**

**“Active Is” Event Posters**

**“Active Is” Activity Prompts**

**“Active Is” Event Ads**

# WALK ON: Engagement, Motivation & Quality Assurance



## ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

Once your workplace walking program has started, you will need to find ways to motivate participants to remain active in the long-term. Helping people stay motivated and keeping their enthusiasm high is an ongoing and important task.

It is important to remember that there is not a “one size fits all” for motivation. Some walkers are motivated by the health hazards of a sedentary lifestyle, and still others by the fun or companionship, and some because of environmental reasons. Here are some suggestions for how to keep your colleagues on track:

### A WALK IN THE PARK

#### • Visual reminders of progress

Often linked to specific programs, these can include wall charts, posters or graphs illustrating either individual or group successes in reaching walking targets and goals. For example, climbing Mount Everest or Cross Canada Challenges, with various achievement milestones, are frequent themes used to motivate employee groups. Again, these reminders can be the same as those used in promotional efforts, such as stairway prompts that are a visual reminder to motivate employees to take the stairs instead of the elevator. For more information about starting the Stairway to Health initiative see the Now You're Walking Section of this toolkit.

#### • Challenges

Peer encouragement is a very useful motivation technique. To be most effective, challenges should emphasize participation rather than competition. For ideas on how to start a pedometer challenge and other challenge ideas see the Now You're Walking Section of this toolkit.

#### • Social support

Encourage your colleagues to walk in pairs or groups, or meet up with friends from other nearby workplaces. During especially busy days, a friendly invite and reminder from others helps to motivate someone who otherwise may not get out and walk by themselves. The invite gives people an opportunity to introduce their friends to the group, promote socialization and companionship as well as adherence to activity.

#### • Self-monitoring strategies

Wearing a pedometer can increase motivation to walk because some participants like to track their progress in tangible ways, and a pedometer provides instant feedback. A log to track pedometer steps and distance can be found in the Resource Section of this toolkit. Logging time spent walking or number of walking routes completed can also serve as a way to monitor progress. If employees have GPS on their phones, blackberries or watches, they can also monitor more detailed information such as heart rate, elevation, and pace in addition to distance and time. For example, there are free iPhone apps that will serve as pedometers and more. Check out: iMapmyrun <http://itunes.apple.com/app/imapmyrun/id291890420?mt=8> or StepLiteTrack <http://itunes.apple.com/app/steptraklite/id289521481?mt=8> or the Now You're Walking Section of this toolkit to learn about other tracking programs.

## POWER WALKING

#### • Incentive programs

Rewards and incentives help to keep people motivated. Participation certificates, prizes and rewards for certain achievements have been usefully employed in many workplaces. Gift certificates, discount coupons, T-shirts, water bottles, plaques, coffee mugs, buttons, pens and pins are examples of incentive items, and can be tied into the ongoing promotion of your workplace walking initiative. For example, many workplaces offer an employee wellness points program that rewards regular participation by providing gift items upon achieving certain thresholds of participation. The gift items become increasingly higher in value the more the employee participates or achieves his/her goals.

#### • Recognition programs

Recognition programs “publicly promote” the achievements of individual participants, groups or volunteers. Identifying achievements in newsletters, electronically broadcasting brief announcements about successes or reaching certain targets, posting pictures, etc. can make the participant feel good about his/her accomplishment and can motivate others to try to reach their goals.





### **Documenting the Impact**

It is important to document the impact of a program immediately after the program or event ends. There are 2 types of assessments that can be conducted: immediate or short and long term outcome. Immediate assessment is conducted immediately following the event or program. Short and long term outcome assessment examines the effect that a program has on participants over the longer term (2-5 years). Questions to consider include:

- Did the program achieve its goals in terms of participation rates and satisfaction?
- What difference did the program make for participants and the workplace?
- Did the messages we developed effectively reach everyone we wanted, and what was the impact of those messages?
- Were the incentives effective for increasing participation and commitment?
- Which types of programs were most successful (frequency of repeat walkers, greatest numbers participating, etc.) in terms of increasing the level of walking in the workplace?

### **Immediate Participant Feedback**

To help you track the immediate impact of your walking initiative, you can use the Impact Questionnaire which can be found in the Resource Section of this toolkit. This tool helps you to gather feedback from participants in your walking program.

## **POWER WALKING**

### **• Short and Long Term Outcomes**

While it is tempting to try and measure longer-term outcomes from a walking initiative, such as decreased absenteeism, issues of privacy and access to such protected information sometimes make it really difficult. As well, because something like absenteeism can be the result of many variables outside the scope of a walking program (e.g., family circumstances, aging and declining health, relationships at work), only an in-depth research study would be able to identify how a worksite walking program contributed to decreasing absenteeism/turnover and increasing productivity etc.

Conducting a follow up assessment will allow you to see what the longer term impact or outcome of the program, event or policy etc. was. This requires a bigger investment of time and money, and it usually helps to have an expert provide some advice. For example, to understand how the initiative has fared, you could:

- Follow up with long-time participants, and those colleagues who never attended or infrequently attended the initiative, to find more in-depth information about their experiences through an interview or survey.
- Review the implementation tracking/event observation forms and impact questionnaire results to calculate statistics for monthly, quarterly or annual participation rates, levels of satisfaction and self-reported changes among colleagues.
- Track budget expenditures and/or volunteer and in-kind commitments to tally the investment in the initiative.

**Remember!** As your event or program unfolds, it is important to track and monitor the results. The more time that passes between your event and when you complete your assessment, the longer the process becomes, as it will be harder to remember details and participant feedback. Making quality assurance a step in your planning and execution process will ensure that each event you plan will improve your outcome.

*CD Resources for this section:*

**Implementation Tracking Sheet**

**Event Observation Tracking Sheet**

**Impact Questionnaire**



Below are the resources found on the companion CD.

## Paving the Way

- Business Case
- Workplace Charter Agreement

## Taking Stock

- Employee Needs and Interests Questionnaire

## Now You're Walking

- Starting a Walking Club
- Health Screening Questionnaire
- Getting Your Body Ready, Warm-Up for Walking
- How much Walking is Enough?
- Walk-About
- Barriers to Being Physically Active Quiz and Suggestions for Overcoming Physical Activity Barriers
- Pedometers - Making Every Step Count
- Pedometer Walking Log
- How Walkable is the Area Around Your Workplace?
- 12 Month Calendar
- Attendance Sheet
- FAQ's
  - Benefits of Walking
  - Safety and Injury Prevention
  - Shoes and Gear
  - Pace and Technique
  - Sticking with Training
  - Shift Work-Getting Enough Sleep and Physical Activity

## Walk On: Quality Assurance

- Implementation Tracking Sheet
- Event Observation Tracking Sheet
- Impact Questionnaire

## Additional Resources

- Links

