

How to Organize a Walking Group

- **Getting started**
 1. Starting a walking group within your workplace is a great way for you and your colleagues to become physically active during the workday.
 2. A minimum of 10 minutes intervals of activity is recommended in order to accumulate a total of 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy.
 3. It's easy and inexpensive!
 4. You feel better, look better, reduce your stress level, and have more energy than before.

- **Publicizing and motivating**
 1. Spread the word – use email, voicemail and posters to get people interested.
 2. Make it fun and unstructured. Start slowly so that none of your co-workers are too intimidated to continue.
 3. Supplement a brisk walk for your usual coffee break – it will feel great to get some fresh air.
 4. Promote a lunch hour walking group.
 5. Map out a safe route that takes between 15 and 40 minutes so that people at all fitness levels can enjoy the course.
 6. Have a back-up indoor route in case the weather is poor – take a trip to walk through the mall if your workplace isn't conducive to indoor walking.
 7. Gradually increase the length of time you're walking.
 8. Keep track of your groups' progress on a poster or graph so that people see what they're accomplishing, and maybe others will feel inspired to join as well.
 9. Hold a contest or challenge between departments.
 10. Host a heart healthy nutritious potluck before or after your walking groups lunch hour walk.
 11. Ask your colleagues when they would prefer to walk. Some people need a "pick me up" in the morning while others require one in the late afternoon.

- **Precautions**
 1. Wear appropriate shoes! (see the tips at the end)
 2. Dress for the weather or bring clothes to change into for your walk.
 3. Practice sun safety year round. Make sure your moisturizer has an SPF of at least 15, or wear sunscreen if necessary.
 4. Carry a bottle of water with you in order to stay hydrated.
 5. Stretch before and after to prevent stiff muscles.

- **Benefits**
 1. Burns calories
 2. Strengthens your back muscles
 3. Slims your waist
 4. Easy on your joints
 5. Strengthens your bones
 6. Lowers blood pressure
 7. Allows time with friends and family
 8. Shapes and tones your legs and butt
 9. Cuts cholesterol
 10. Reduces risk of heart disease, diabetes, and more
 11. Reduces stress
 12. Sleep better
 13. Improves mood and outlook on life
 14. Can be done almost anywhere
 15. Requires no equipment
 16. It's FREE!

- **Tips for finding a good pair of walking shoes**
 1. Look for a low, supportive heel that rounds (or bevels) in. A thick heel or one that flairs out (like many running shoes) will cause your foot to slap down rather than roll. This slows down forward momentum and increases the occurrence of sore shins.
 2. A walker's foot hits heel first and then rolls gradually from heel-to-toe. So, you will need a flexible sole and more bend in the toe than a runner. You should be able to twist and bend the toe area.
 3. Next, look for a shoe that is lightweight and breathable. The last thing you want is the chunky heavy leather walking shoe.
 4. The most important thing of course is a shoe that fits properly. Be sure your foot has enough room in the toe box. There should be a thumbnails width between your toes and the end of the shoe. The shoe should be wide enough in the toe that your toes can move freely. Your heel should not slip, and the shoe should not pinch or bind, especially across the arch or ball of your foot.
 5. Go shoe shopping at the end of the day or after your walk when your feet may be slightly swollen. Also be sure to wear the same socks you will be wearing during your walks. This can make a huge difference in how the shoe fits. Try on both shoes. Your feet may not be the same size!
 6. Do not shop when you are in a hurry. Be sure to walk around the store for a few minutes on a hard surface. If the store has an objection to this, find another store. It is worth the effort to find the right shoe for you and it is worth spending a few extra dollars.
 7. Wear your shoes in the house for a few days to try them out. Don't venture outdoors until you are sure the shoes are going to work for you. If they don't work you'll want to exchange them before scuffing them up outside.
 8. Keep track of how many miles you have put on your shoes, and replace them every 300 to 600 miles. To extend the life of your shoes, be sure to only wear them for your walks. Also, rotating two pair of shoes will give them time to "bounce back" between walks.

The information in this document was obtained through internet research. If you have any questions about the information, please contact humr@plu.edu.