

WALKING CHALLENGE

There's never been a better time to get moving.

Step-by-step guide to hosting a walking challenge

1. SELECT A LEADER OR LEADERS TO COORDINATE THE COMPETITION.

Once the walking challenge has been approved by the office/department, walking challenge leader(s) will be responsible for getting people signed up, recording and reporting step totals every week, and emailing participants weekly with updates on the challenge.

2. DECIDE ON A DEPARTMENT GOAL.

Give participants something to work toward. You may choose to make the challenge into a collaborative distance goal or a friendly competition. You can have weekly rewards and recognition or at the end of the challenge. Be creative with names, prizes, and goals for the competition!

To help you estimate a reasonable goal, have some of your co-workers record your step counts with a pedometer over 3 days. For the purposes of the challenge, estimate that 1 mile is around 2,000 steps. For example, walking an average of 6,000 steps a day would be approximately 3 miles each day. Using this information you should be able to work out approximately how many miles each team member could walk over the duration of your challenge. Based on that information, you can pick a location and adjust the length of your challenge to give enough time to walk to that location, or you could pick a length of the challenge and find a destination that you would be able to reach in that amount of time. You might want to increase the target goal slightly to motivate you to find ways of walking more, but keep it realistic!

3. ORGANIZE YOUR CHALLENGE.

Figure out how you will best be able to organize your challenge, monitor who is signed up, and track participants' steps and progress toward the goal. The resources on the [Walking Challenge Toolkit webpage](#) include a sign-up and tracking spreadsheet you can download and use to help with registration and tracking individuals' or teams' weekly steps.

4. COMMUNICATE.

You've got the structure ready; now it's time to get the word out about your challenge! Consider using flyers, e-mails, posters, and announcements to advertise and recruit for the challenge. The resources on the [Walking Challenge Toolkit webpage](#) include sample e-mails and flyers that you can download and customize for your specific challenge. You may also want to provide information about the benefits of walking and physical activity each week

5. RECOGNIZE ACHIEVEMENTS AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION.

With participants signed up and a goal in place, start the challenge and work towards the goal. Keep track of participants and monitor progress as the challenge progresses. Provide participants status updates and recognize people for doing well. Encouragement and suggestions to increase steps can go a long way. Have a regular way to announce progress and achievements and consider a public place to make the information available.

There are many ways to promote participation in a walking challenge and recognize people for being physically active. There are lots of creative ways to reward people for their efforts. Some examples include:

- Fundraising efforts throughout the challenge and the winner(s) choose which charity benefits from the funds.
- Creative hand-crafted trophies and bragging rights.
- Certificates of recognition/participation.
- A potluck lunch to announce the winners.
- Prizes provided by the department or morale committee.

6. WRAP UP.

When your challenge is over, congratulate everyone on their participation and yourself for a job well done! You may assess and review what went well and what you would do differently for a future challenge. Did participants reach the goal? The resources on the [Walking Challenge Toolkit webpage](#) contains sample evaluation forms to request feedback from participants and to provide Healthy for Life feedback on this Walking Challenge Toolkit. If you have suggestions, comments, questions, or concerns, please send them to us at wellness@umsystem.edu.

Part of the Healthy for Life walking challenge toolkit available at <http://umurl.us/beactive>.

