

WALKING WORKS

for Schools

Walking is a form of exercise accessible to just about everybody. It's safe, simple and doesn't require practice. Walking is free, easy to fit into daily life, and can be a great form of transportation. Use this resource to organize a walking club or walk-to-school program at your school that will energize the entire community!

WALKING CLUBS

A walking club encourages students and staff to begin walking or to increase their current amount of physical activity by making it fun and rewarding. Walking is a great form of exercise and you can fit it in whenever and wherever it works! Remember, small steps make a big difference!

STEPS TO FORM A WALKING CLUB

1. IDENTIFY A COORDINATOR:

1. Identify a parent, community member, grandparent, older student, or an adult within the school building who has a passion for walking to lead the charge. Be sure to involve students in planning, to receive their buy-in from the beginning. Invite other key adults to lead the walk once a week. When adults model good physical activity habits, students may be more likely to catch on and follow their lead.

2. PROMOTE:

2. Have students create banners or flags that they can carry while walking to promote the club. Let students know about the club during morning or afternoon announcements to encourage and invite all students and staff who wish to participate.

3. MEET:

3. Walking activities may occur before or after school or during recess, physical education, health class, or incorporated into curriculum in other classes. Ask students to design walking routes on school grounds or in the school buildings that provide all students an opportunity to walk safely and increase their physical activity.

4. GOALS:

4. Set goals for each time the club meets. The goals can be based on the number of laps walked around a track, number of steps tabulated on a pedometer, or the number of minutes the club walks. Give incentives to help motivate individuals. Incentives can include tokens, stickers, or pins for their sneakers. Make sure to ask for donations from local service clubs and businesses.



5.

PROGRESS:

Create a system for logging and tracking mileage or number of times walked. Create your own log or use one of these:

[About.Com Log](#)

or

[PE Central](#)

Ideas for Fun Destinations (have "points of interest" along your trek! For example, if

your trek is across the USA, highlight facts of each state as they cross):

- Walking to Disney World
- Walking Across the USA
- Walking Across the State of Iowa
- Walking the RAGBRAI route
- Walking Across the County
- Walking Around the World
- Walk to the site of an upcoming sports event (Super Bowl, MLB All Star Game, etc.)

6.

MAKE IT FUN:

Fun Events/Themes:

Try some of the walking activities below to get your whole school excited about joining the walking club. Remember, the goal is to get as many people walking as possible!

- The Morning Mile: Start a club that meets in the morning and plan to get in a mile before school starts
- Walk on Wednesdays "WOW": establish a day at least monthly to encourage the whole school to participate in the walking club and help recruit new members
- Set up a walking circuit with stretching and strength activities at each corner of your school's football field, track, or gym
- Set up a cross-country walk or hike. Create a map of the walking course, split into teams and take pictures along the way
- Place several decks of cards along the walking route. Pick up one card without looking at it, and walk to as many areas as possible, picking up a

[Click Here](#)

card at each spot. Add up the points from the cards each person collects, and hand out prizes for high and low point totals

- Frequent Walker Program: Punch a card each day they walk. Once their card is full students receive a small incentive

[Click Here](#)

- Paint animal footprints of the school mascot on a popular walking path to the school
- Play music and incorporate different types of movement to mix things up
- Hold a treasure hunt by creating a list of objects, safety signs, and special landmarks and ask the children to locate them on their walk
- Organize walk around the community and identify different types of businesses and professional offices along the route

SAFETY FIRST:

Be sure to make arrangements to ensure that the walking routes are safe.

SUCCESS STORIES:

Every Thursday at Audubon Elementary, in Audubon Iowa, students are encouraged to walk the perimeter of the playground. They track their miles by using punch cards. The incentives include charms/tokens to collect on a chain necklace or bracelet. It is estimated their students are averaging over 300 miles per class per year! The students even got school personnel to participate!

Southeast Polk Junior High in Iowa began a walking club as part of its Fuel Up To Play 60 program. The students were encouraged to walk on the track surrounding the football field after they were finished with lunch. During the winter months the indoor gym was also open for walking. On one fall day the students were surprised to find that KC Wolf, the mascot of the Kansas City Chiefs wanted to join their club. KC Wolf joined the students during lunch on a nice September day and led the club around the track for several laps.



HEALTHY SNACKS!

1. Don't forget to make healthy snacks a part of your walking program!

1. Fruit that is fresh, dried, or canned
2. Fresh veggies with low-fat dip
3. Whole grain or whole wheat choices
4. Reduced fat string cheese and low-fat yogurt
5. Healthy protein choices (lean meat, nuts/seeds, and beans)
6. Water, 100% juice, and low-fat or fat-free milk

2. Healthy Snack Ideas

[Click Here](#)

3. MyPlate Resources



WALK TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Fewer kids walk to school than ever before. Walking or biking to school gives children a sense of freedom and responsibility, allows them to enjoy the fresh air, and provides opportunities to get to know their neighborhoods and children of other ages, while arriving at school alert, refreshed, and ready to start their day.

Walk to School Day brings parents, teachers, children, and community leaders together to focus on the importance of physical activity, safety, and “walkable” communities. It also teaches kids and parents to think of walking as an active, safe and healthy means of transportation.

How to Get a Walk to School/Safe Routes to School Program Started:

1. Determine who is involved:

- The Champions: individuals who have passion and enthusiasm will give life to the program
- A team approach: parents, students, teachers, neighbors, school staff members, businesses, community groups, law enforcement/crossing guards
- For more information → [Click Here](#)

2. Collect Information

- Student surveys: to determine how children are getting to school. For more information → [Click Here](#)
- Traffic counts: to determine how many vehicles enter school grounds to drop off children
- Parent surveys: measure attitudes and identify obstacles and opportunities for changing behavior. For more information → [Click Here](#)

3. Promote Your Program

- People need to hear and read about your program at least 3 times before they pay attention.
- Post flyers and banners, put information in student folders that go home every week, e-mail, school newsletters, school website, school announcements, and incorporate classroom activities into the program.

4. Kick Off Events

- Walk and Bike to School Days are a great way to kick off your program and generate enthusiasm. International Walk to School Day, held the first Wednesday each October, offers an opportunity to plug your school into a successful worldwide movement.

[International Walk to School](#)

[Resources and Flyers](#)

5. Mapping the Routes

- Map the routes that children currently take to school.
- Walk the routes and measure your neighborhood’s “walkability” to identify safety issues or barriers.
- For more information → [Click Here](#)

6. Create an improvement plan:

- Form a Safe Routes to School taskforce
- Evaluate existing conditions
- [Identify Solutions](#)
- Get improvements funded while working with the city

[Click Here](#)



FUN EVENTS/THEMES:

- Declare a car free day: each family is challenged to give up their cars to transport their child to school for one particular day
- Hold a walking festival/health fair: Invite organizations to set up informational booths
- Start a Walking School Bus: a small group of children walk to school under the supervision of one or more adults



Walking School Bus

Bicycle Train

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO ENGAGE MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Classroom instruction motivates children to participate in Safe Routes to School program through fun activities that encourage them to walk and bike. The instruction teaches students how their transportation choices affect their community, the environment, and their health. Here are some examples of class projects for middle and high school students.

Walking with a Purpose (see page 5)

Classroom Activities

Walking should be a viable option for everyone in a community. For that to happen, communities must make walking part of everyday life, incorporating it into civic culture, decision making, and the personal habits of the citizens.

SUCCESS STORIES:

In Cass County Iowa there are three towns that participate in the walk to school program. They are Atlantic, Anita, and Massena. Volunteers are the key to success in Cass County, with 12 volunteers helping out with the program each day. Each starting location has 2 volunteers that wear a walking vest and have a supply kit. Each location is about $\frac{3}{4}$ to a mile from the elementary school. Most of the kids who walk are 6th grade and younger, with up to 102 kids participating each day. They walk every day, unless it is 40 degrees or colder or if it is raining. They make an announcement by 6:30am if the walk is going to be canceled due to weather. If kids walk 75% of the time, they get a final prize. In the past the final prizes included drawstring bags, color changing cups, jump ropes, and

frisbees. Also, every 5 days that a kid walks, they get a walking charm that they attach to a keychain on their book bag.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

IOWA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

SRTS is a rising international effort to increase safety and promote walking and bicycling to school through the "5Es: engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation. Iowa Department of Transportation coordinates Safe Routes to School in Iowa.

[Click Here](#)

FUEL UP TO PLAY 60

Fuel Up to Play 60 is a fun, interactive program that allows YOU to decide how to make your school an even healthier place. You can put your ideas and plans into action to help everyone eat healthy and get active.

[Click Here](#)

TEAM NUTRITION

Team Nutrition is an initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to support the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance for foodservice, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity.

[Click Here](#)

i-WALK

I-WALK is an Iowa Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project funded through the Iowa Department of Transportation, administered by Iowa Department of Public Health and Iowa State University Extension, and implemented by communities across Iowa.

[Click Here](#)

IOWANS FIT FOR LIFE

Iowans Fit for Life is a joint statewide initiative between the Iowa Department of Public Health and its partners that promotes increased opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating for Iowans of all ages.

[Click Here](#)

IOWA ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION AND DANCE

Provides leadership and support for the enhancement of movement, leisure and health related programs central to healthy, active lifestyles and lifelong learning.

[Click Here](#)

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Walk Your Way to Fitness Resource. Increase your fitness level by walking; it's the most popular adult exercise and can improve your health and outlook on life. Includes a sample walking program, a "talk test," and tips on comfortable attire.

[Click Here](#)