

Center for Health Improvement



Walking Meetings Energize Body and Mind

Walking daily is considered one of the best activities for overall health and lends itself to worksite wellness activities. All over the nation 10,000 steps campaigns are helping to promote easy healthy lifestyle changes. A study conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee found that women who took 10,000 steps a day over an eight-week period saw improvements in glucose tolerance and a significant reduction in blood pressure.ⁱ Another study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, found that a brisk 30-minute walk three times a week was just as effective as anti-depressant medication in relieving the symptoms of severe depression in middle-aged and elderly individuals.ⁱⁱ

Walking meetings are a great way to energize your workday while providing essential exercise for yourself. Walking meetings may be used for brainstorming, creative discussion, and problem solving.

Checklist for Successful Walking Meetings

- Inform your meeting members that walking meetings are “big idea” meetings and not detail oriented meetings.
- Keep the number of participants to 6 or less. More than 6 and some members will not be able to hear the discussion.
- Ideal meetings are a minimum of 20 minutes long.
- Send out the agenda ahead of time to inform your meeting team of the discussion topics to ensure everyone is prepared.
- Make your office “walking” friendly by encouraging people to bring a pair of walking shoes to work. If they know you are

going to host walking meetings then this will motivate workers to have a change of shoes on hand.

- ☑ Choose a pedestrian friendly site. Be mindful of extreme weather, if outside conditions are not conducive for walking, then walk through your building, a nearby indoor mall or around your floor.
- ☑ Walk at a comfortable pace where all members of the group can speak without being out of breath.
- ☑ Purchase a pedometer to log the number of steps you take during your walking meeting. Encourage co-workers to also keep track of how many steps they take daily. You may even want to challenge other co-workers to see who can walk the most daily or weekly. A walking challenge might increase the number of walking meetings held due to increased interest by co-workers.
- ☑ Group members should be encouraged to bring a bottle of water with them for the meeting.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine recommend that all Americans accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity daily. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports notes that "significant health benefits can be obtained by including a moderate amount of physical activity, for example 30 minutes of brisk walking," on a daily basis.ⁱⁱⁱ

Check out [America on the Move](#) for more information about walking and organizing walking groups.

ⁱ Swartz, A. M., S. J. Strath, B. A. Loftus, B. B. Moore, & D. L. Thompson. (2003). Increasing daily walking improves glucose tolerance in overweight women. *Preventive Medicine*, 37, 356-362.

ⁱⁱ Blumenthal, J.; Babyak, M.; Moore, K.; Craighead, W.; Herman, S.; Khatri, P.; Waugh, R.; Napolitano, M.; Forman, L.; Appelbaum, M.; Doraiswamy, P.; & Krishnan, K. (1999). Effects of Exercise Training on Older Patients With Major Depression. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 159, 2349-2356.

ⁱⁱⁱ The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. (2005). *Physical Activity Fact Sheet*. Retrieved April 1, 2005, from http://www.fitness.gov/resources_factsheet.htm