

How to Have a Kickoff

The day has finally arrived – your Walking Club is ready for its debut! Celebrate the launch of your Walking Club with a kickoff event. Here's what to put on the agenda.

- **Plan host.** Whether your kickoff event is in the conference room at work, a playground in the park, or in your own backyard, welcome walkers and congratulate them on their commitment to get active.
- **Sign them up.** Create a Walking Club roster by circulating a sign-in sheet. Ask walkers for their name, email and phone number.
- **Hash out the details.** Do you have a crowd of early birds or night owls? Do they prefer to hike the trails or zigzag the neighborhood? The best way to find out what will keep your members walking is simply to ask.
- **Name the club.** Create an identity for your Walking Club by giving it a name. It could be a name that inspires a chuckle or one that conveys determination. Another idea is to personalize the name based on where you live or work.
- **Share motivations and set goals.** Ask each person why they wanted to join a Walking Club. Maybe it's a chance to jump-start a fizzling exercise routine, or maybe it's a remedy for a sedentary lifestyle. By sharing the driving force behind each walker's step, your group can start to establish bonds and friendships that will help them achieve their goals together.
- **Go for a walk.** Head out for the first walk with your new Walking Club! If members are beginning at different fitness levels, mention that everyone should walk at their own pace.
- **Debrief.** End the walk with a quick discussion about the walking route. What did they enjoy? What could be improved? Stick with this route or try another?
- **Make plans for the next walk.** Set the time and place for the next walk and remind members to RSVP on Meetup Everywhere.

START SMART

Help your Walking Club members make – and not break – their goals by following the SMART goals strategy:

- **Specific:** When will I walk?
- **Measurable:** How long or how far will I walk?
- **Action-oriented:** What actions can I take to meet my goal?
- **Realistic:** Can I stick to this schedule?
- **Timely:** What's the timeframe for hitting my goal?

A SMART goal is: I will walk 30 minutes with the Walking Club on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday of this week.

A SMART goal is not: Get more exercise.

“Ask yourself why you want to engage in physical activity and focus on the one motivator that means the most to you.”

Elizabeth Pegg Frates, MD

Institute of Lifestyle Medicine at Harvard Medical School