



Walking Kit

TIP SHEET for Organisers & Health Professionals: walking groups, events, activities

The Pathways Walking Kit has been developed to get more people walking more often. It is primarily targeted at people who don't walk or could walk more.

This Tip Sheet provides information on:

- Starting a Neighbourhood House or Community Centre walking group
- Working with your General Practitioners (GPs), physiotherapists, dieticians, chiropractors and other health professionals
- Community Walking Challenges and Events
- Promotional campaigns and other activities
- Assistance

Starting a Neighbourhood House or Community Centre walking group

We are encouraging health professionals to use these informative and useful kits to initiate walking groups through Neighbourhood Houses (NH) or Community Centres (CC). These grassroots organisations are community focussed, and therefore perfect to host a local walking group.

- Find out if your local NH or CC already has a walking group.
- If they do, introduce them to the Pathways Kits and encourage participants to undertake the 10 week program.
- If they don't, ask the NH/CC coordinator if they or anyone they know could be a potential 'walking group leader'.
- Meet this person and go through Fact Sheet 10 of the resource and encourage them to start an informal walking group.
- If they are very enthusiastic, they may prefer to start a 'formal' walking group.
- There are several key steps to both types of walking groups, primarily recruitment, promotion, organising details (days, times and meeting places) and determining walking routes. As stated, Fact Sheet 10 will guide you through the best strategies. Provide all participants with a Pathways Kit.
- If the walking group is going to be targeted at the broader community, an actual 'launch' may be appropriate, so make sure you get the local media there! Further promotion through fliers, posters and word-of-mouth will also help.

Key questions to consider

- Who will you target: who is not included locally in physical activity and would MOST benefit?
For example, people living alone, new mums/dads and babies in prams, people with diabetes, older adults, etc.



- How would you best include walking with connectedness and mental health outcomes to reduce isolation, increase social connection and increase motivation and support in a 'normal' community environment?
- Is there an opportunity to partner with an agency working with at risk or specific client groups?
- Or does a suitable group exist that you can link your clients into?
- Where is the best, most logical, most likely and sustainable place for a group to congregate, and also what is an appropriate destination point of their activity?
- Is a cuppa/drink/stay and chat opportunity included at the end?
Include this in the questions when establishing the group and designing it to meet clients needs, as it is an important aspect.

Working with your GPs, physiotherapists, dieticians, chiropractors and other health professionals

Health professionals have an enormous influence on people's lifestyle choices and can positively impact on physical activity levels.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to introduce local GPs, physiotherapists, dieticians, chiropractors and other health professionals to the Pathways Kits and explain how these professionals can recommend the kits to people who will benefit from regular walking.

Nearly everyone in your community will visit one of these health professionals. If those in your community adopt the Pathways Kit as a useful physical activity 'prescription' resource, the chances of it's use within the community are increased dramatically.

As a local agency representative, you know these health professionals so we need you to introduce the Pathways Kits to them. If you don't know your local health professionals, this is a fantastic way to introduce yourself - by offering a new resource that will benefit their clients!

Community Walking Challenges and Events

The Pathways Walking Kits are a perfect tool to be used in Community Walking Challenges. The 'challenge' could be a **one day event** used to create awareness of walking and distribute the kits, or it could be a **10 week pedometer program**. The Log Book is perfect for recording progress over time.

We are encouraging health professionals and agencies to consider a Community Walking Challenge as a fantastic event to increase awareness of walking as a beneficial physical activity to people's health. A challenge can create a **buzz** amongst the community, and will also attract the attention of the local media, thus enhancing the impact on the general public.

For example:

A ONE DAY Event

Aim:

- To get each town in your shire to have as many people walking continuously on the same day, along the same route, to accrue a total amount of steps and compare this to other towns across the shire to determine the 'town which walked the furthest'.
- (This would have to be averaged out by number of steps per participant).
- Use as a community builder and fund raiser

Potential Process:

- Pull together an organising committee of representatives from several relevant agencies, organisations or groups.
- Discuss the most appropriate event (i.e. teams competing within one town, or towns competing against other towns).
- Determine details such as dates, venue/s, walking routes, catering, budget, registration, collation of information, evaluation, contingency plan and other organisational details.
- Discuss options for corporate and local business sponsorship for financial support and/or prizes, and how best to manage this. Consider the appropriateness of potential sponsors to your focus of physical activity, healthy eating, and active living.
- Once these details are confirmed, a thorough promotional campaign is required to create an interest amongst the community - get the media involved.
- Registration of participants is a preferred option so as you can track the numbers or people to ensure it will be successful.
- Confirm all organisational details as the event gets closer, and increase promotion.
- Run the event, and get as many people active as possible!
- Evaluate the event to ensure positives and negatives are captured.

A 10 week Pedometer Program

Aim:

- To engage individuals or a group of people to participate in a set 10 week program focussing on increasing walking or physical activity levels by setting goals, logging progress, and using motivational tools.

OR

- To engage your community to participate in a set 10 week program focussing on increasing walking or physical activity levels by setting goals, logging progress, and using motivational tools.

Potential Process:

- Determine your target group for the 10 week pedometer program.
- Discuss the concept with them, and encourage them to participate. Gauge their interest, and proceed if it's positive.

- Determine numbers of participants, dates to start the program, any further promotion, walking route/s, collation of information (registrations), evaluation, prizes, and other organisational details.
- Discuss coverage of the pedometer program with the media. A weekly feature in the local newspaper or similar exposure will create interest amongst the community.
- A launch of the program may also attract the media, while it will create enthusiasm amongst participants and motivate them to have a real go at the program.
- Throughout the duration of the 10 week program, some form of monitoring should take place to maintain enthusiasm and keep participants focussed. If it's a small group, weekly progress sessions or scheduled walks could achieve this. With a community program, the weekly media update would be the best method.
- At the conclusion of the program, some form of event will bring participants together to celebrate their achievements. It will also provide the opportunity to address participants on the benefits of continued regular walking and to keep up what they've started.
- An evaluation should then take place to determine whether the program was successful, should it be run again, and if so, what improvements need to be made.

Promotional campaigns and other activities

There are various other opportunities to promote walking within your community. A targeted 'promotional campaign' is one possibility and may include one of the following:

- **Walk the dog - RSPCA/Heart Foundation**
 - Promote the benefits to individuals, families, and pets of walking the dog more frequently or further. It's a great way to spend time with family, friends or other dog owners.
 - See <http://www.rspca.org.au/campaign/wtd.asp> for more information.
- **Have a COW (Clubs Offering Walking) - Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly**
 - Any sporting club can start a walking group as a secondary activity. By making walkers 'social members', it gives the walking group identity, a place to meet and socialise, access to insurance, and access to potential members. For the club, it provides another source of income, a greater membership base, and an enhanced community reputation.
 - Contact The Centre on (03) 5721 0235 or picsar@thecentre.vic.edu.au, or the Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly directly on (03) 5382 4599 or wimспорт@netconnect.com.au for more information.
- **Workplace pedometer programs**
 - A great way to encourage a captive audience to increase their walking is to approach specific workplaces. Encouraging employers to undertake a pedometer program for their employees, especially those with a sedentary role, has numerous benefits to the company and individuals.



- This program would either work best within one large company, or as a competition between companies of similar size.
- Contact The Centre on (03) 5721 0235 or picsar@thecentre.vic.edu.au for more information, or see the Gippsland Regional Sports Assembly website http://www.gippsport.com.au/Partic_Workplace.htm.
- **Walking Challenges**
 - Programs that are designed to be used as a team or business challenge are available on the Internet. See these sites for more information:
 - Global Corporate Challenge
<http://www.globalcc.com.au/>
 - Walking with Attitude Challenges - team and individual
http://www.walkingwithattitude.com/challenges_public.php
- **Book Walking**
 - A great way to motivate people who walk on their own is to encourage them to use 'audio books'. People can purchase or borrow audio books, and listen to them while walking.
 - Audio books can be bought on line from sites such as www.audible.com, in WAV or MP3 format suitable for portable MP3 players.
 - New and second-hand audio CDs can be purchased from websites such as www.ebay.com.au or www.amazon.com, while new ones can also be purchased from any bookstore.
 - If your local library has a wide range of audio books, this promotional campaign could be great for your area, especially if some of the population is rurally isolated.
 - People can borrow books on CDs or cassette from their local library and play them in a portable CD/tape player. For example, The Upper Murray Regional Library has around 640 books on CD and countless books on cassette. Check their on line catalogue by selecting 'compact disc' at <http://www.umrl.nsw.gov.au/>.
 - For more information on this idea, contact Jozette Dellemain on 0423 781 177 or jozette.dellemain@dva.gov.au.
- **Nordic Pole Walking**
 - A new craze taking off in Australia which has numerous health benefits for participants is Nordic Pole Walking. The use of specially designed poles aides in balance, provides an upper body workout, and allows people to tackle more challenging trails as both legs and arms are assisting the body to move.
 - Participants require the special poles, therefore this initiative may require some form of funding, however they could be used as part of a 'loan program' or borrowed out for trial periods.
 - Colleen Wilson-Lord runs a pole walking group in Albury every Saturday morning. For more information on this group, or Pole Walking in general, contact Colleen on (02) 6026 3006 or rayna@albury.net.au.
 - You can also check out the Nordicfit Australia website at <http://www.nordicfit.com.au/>.

- **Charity Fundraisers and other walking events**
 - There are a variety of walking events for charities and other great causes that you could get your community involved in. Or you could organise your own event and donate proceeds to a local charity of your choice.
 - Some walking events held in Victoria include:
 - RSPCA - Million Paws Walk - <http://www.millionpawswalk.com.au>
 - Oxfam Walk Against Want - <http://www.oxfam.org.au/walk/>
 - Michael Long's 'The Long Walk' - <http://www.thelongwalk.com.au/>
 - Walking Tall Campaign - <http://www.walkingtall.com.au/>
 - Walk to Work Day - <http://www.walk.com.au>
 - 10,000 Steps National Program - <http://www.10000steps.com.au/>

Assistance

The Centre Active Recreation Network (CARN), your local council, walking groups and other PCP agencies can assist with organising these activities, events and walking groups. Ensure you get appropriate agencies on board to work collaboratively on the project.

CARN

Phone: (03) 5721 0235

Email: picsar@thecentre.vic.edu.au

Web: <http://www.thecentre.vic.edu.au/carn>

Central Hume PCP Health Promotion Working Group

Sally Matheson

Phone: (03) 5761 2200

Email: sally.matheson@bdmh.hume.org.au

Web: <http://www.centralhumepcp.org>

Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership

Jude Moore

Phone: (02) 6022 9284

Email: JMoore@wodonga.vic.gov.au

Web: <http://www.upperhumepcp.humehealth.com.au>

More Pathways Kits - Ph: (03) 5721 0235, email: picsar@thecentre.vic.edu.au

Or print them from:

http://www.thecentre.vic.edu.au/carn/pathways_walking_kit.html