

# Every Step Counts!

## Walking Campaign Toolkit

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2024

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Stay on Your Feet



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# Benefits of Walking

Evidence suggests that walking may help to maintain physical and cognitive independence as we age by preventing a variety of health problems as well as offering social benefits. These benefits include:

- Strengthen your muscles.
- Help keep your weight steady.
- Lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, colon cancer, and diabetes.
- Strengthen your bones and prevent osteoporosis and osteoarthritis (regular walking could halve the number of people over 45 who fracture their hip).
- Help reduce blood pressure in some people with hypertension.
- Improve your balance and coordination and decrease your likelihood of falling.
- Keep your joints flexible.
- Increase your confidence and mood, and help you feel better all around.
- Improve your energy levels and increase your stamina.
- Reduce anxiety and/or depression.
- Improve your social life – walking is a great way to get out and meet people or socialize with your friends.

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# Every Step Counts

Every Step Counts is a walking campaign designed to encourage individuals to walk. This can be done individually or in a group, and indoors or outside. This resource can be used to develop and implement a walking campaign to encourage community members to increase their physical activity through walking. Additionally, the campaign can foster social connections among this group, further reducing social isolation. This toolkit contains the components and resources required to implement a successful walking campaign.

## Overview

Every Step Counts was adapted from a piloted campaign in 2022 called Spring in Your Step. Spring in Your Step was developed in collaboration with The Town of Mattawa, Stay on Your Feet, and North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit. Similar to Spring in Your Step, Every Step Counts is a campaign designed to run over a designated amount of time (e.g., six weeks) where participants will set a goal distance for themselves and track their steps or the amount of time spent walking. This can be done by using a smart watch, cell phone, pedometer, or other method that the participant has access to. At the end of the campaign participants have the option to share their totals. Every Step Counts encourages all ages to participate, and can be inclusive of family, friends, and other community members who want to walk together.

## Implementation

### Promotion

Promote your walking campaign using what works best for your organization and community (e.g., social media, posters, email, radio, or newspaper advertisements). This can help to reach those who may be interested and increase participation. Connect with your local community partners to get the word out and share the promotional material for your campaign.

Some important information to include when you are promoting your walking campaign is the start date and time, location to pick up tracking sheet and materials, and who to contact for more information.

Some examples of promotional posters and social media posts are shown below. Please feel free to use these examples when creating your own. These examples can also be found at [www.myhealthunit.ca/walkingtoolkit](http://www.myhealthunit.ca/walkingtoolkit)



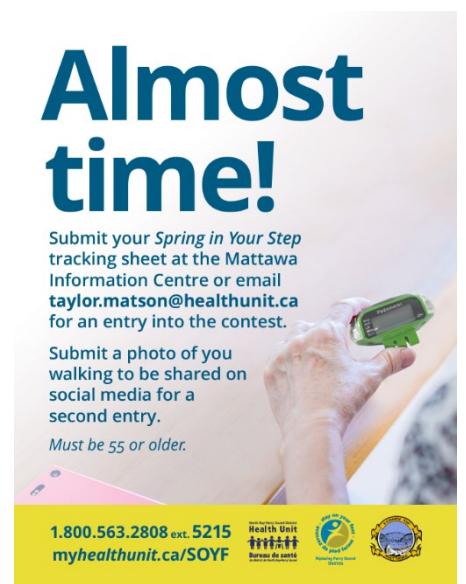
**Social Media**



**Example caption:** Add a little spring in your step! Set a time connect with friends or family over a walk or join @MattawaRecreation 's Walking Program to make new connections while staying active! More information at [www.myhealthunit.ca/soyf](http://www.myhealthunit.ca/soyf).

**Example caption:** Getting out for a walk can help to reduce stress and anxiety. Share in the comments your favourite spots to get out walking! Visit [www.myhealthunit.ca/soyf](http://www.myhealthunit.ca/soyf) to learn more about Spring in Your Step.

**Posters**



Campaign Promotional Poster

Launch Promotional Poster

Submission Promotional Poster

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## Campaign Materials

Material specific to the campaign, such as instruction and tracking sheets, may assist in supporting individuals interested in participating and to provide important information to the community.

The instruction sheet can be adapted to fit the components of your campaign, including local walking routes, information on local walking groups in your community, and prizes. Please refer to page 7 of this toolkit for a template of the instruction sheet.

The participant tracking sheet can be used by participants to set their goal distance and track their daily steps or minutes spent walking. This is a great way to motivate participants to walk, as they are achieving a personal goal. The tracking sheets can be shared by participants at the end of the campaign for a chance to win a prize. Please refer to page 8 of this toolkit for a template of the tracking sheet.

It is encouraged to facilitate walking meet ups at intervals throughout the campaign, that work for your group to foster a sense of community and belonging. Walking can be tracked outside of this group as well.

Educational information on being active, social, and strong, safe footwear, and winter walking among others can be found on [Stay on Your Feet's website](#). Additional information on various topics can be found on the [North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit's website](#) under 'Health Topics'. For example, there is information and resources on [Healthy Aging](#), [Healthy Eating](#), [Vaccinations](#), [Vision Health](#), and many more.

## Route Planning

Plan routes that are safe for individuals of all abilities to walk. These may include low traffic streets with sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, or paved walking or multiuse paths and trails with benches and streetlights. Other options to consider include indoor spaces such as arenas, malls, or walking tracks. It is important to note that outdoor options may not be feasible during the winter months due to snow and ice on the walking surfaces.

## Tips and Considerations

1. **Program launch.** Have an official start of the campaign marked by a launch event. Advertise this using a media release, launch poster, social media posts, and through connecting with your community partners. The event can be customized to what your group may be interested in, but suggestions include open registration, benefits of walking and physical activity, a short presentation, an opportunity to support individuals getting technology set up to track their steps, followed by the inaugural walk of the group.

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2. **Route maps.** Create and distribute maps with various routes to participants so they can choose which safe routes they want to take.
  3. **Make it a contest.** Those who share walking totals will be entered into a draw to win prizes. You can also choose to provide an extra chance to win to people who share photos of them walking, to promote the benefits of physical activity.

## Evaluation

Evaluating the campaign is important to understand how the campaign went, how to improve its effectiveness, and/or to inform future programming decisions. Evaluation can be conducted through surveys or focus groups. Below are a few questions to help you evaluate your program. Additional questions can be added based on your specific campaign and aspects you would like to evaluate.

### Participant questions

- How did you hear about this campaign?
- Did you enjoy participating?
- Would you participate in this campaign again?
- Are you or are you going to sustain walking/are you more active after this campaign?
- What could be improved?
- What was your favorite part of this campaign?
- Did you experience any barriers in participating?

## Conclusion

Every Step Counts is a campaign that was developed for organizations that are interested in promoting being active in their community. Many resources to support planning, implementation, and evaluation can be found at [www.myhealthunit.ca/walkingtoolkit](http://www.myhealthunit.ca/walkingtoolkit). Please ensure you are following your organization's policies and procedure when implementing this campaign.

# Every Step Counts!

## Instruction Sheet

Walking is a great form of physical activity that can be done almost anywhere! Minimizing sedentary time throughout your day can provide health benefits. Walking can also be a great social activity to enjoy with your friends and family. *Let's be active! Let's be social! Let's be strong!*

## How to Participate

- Using a personal step tracking device (e.g., Smartphone with fitness app, smart watch, pedometer, etc.), track your steps or amount of time (hours or minutes) daily on the tracking sheet.
- If you haven't exercised in a while, please contact your primary care provider before beginning an exercise routine.
- Join your local Walking Group or enjoy getting out for walks with family and friends.
- Select a goal distance that you can work towards over the next few weeks and complete the tracking sheet to see your progress.
- Submit the provided tracking sheet to a drop box at the **[Name of Location]** or email a picture of your tracking sheet to **[email address]**.
- By submitting your tracking sheet, you will be entered into a draw for a [name of prize].
- Tracking sheets must be submitted by **[date and time]** to be entered into the draw.

## Where to Walk

Join the **[Town name]** Walking Group! For more information call **[phone number]** or email **[email address]**.

Take a stroll **[insert locations safe and accessible locations to walk, e.g., downtown/ waterfront/ trails/ mall/ arena]**.

## Goal Distances

Corbeil to Bonfield	16 km	20,992 steps	3 hours 34 minutes
Astorville to Trout Creek	32 km	41,984 steps	7 hours 23 minutes
Almaguin Highlands to Callander	47 km	61,664 steps	13 hours 28 minutes
McKellar to Commanda	79 km	103,648 steps	17 hours 44 minutes
Sturgeon Falls to Mattawa	100 km	131,200 steps	23 hours 30 minutes
Wasauksing First Nation to Powassan	132 km	173,184 steps	30 hours
North Bay to Parry Sound	149 km	195,488 steps	36 hours
Sundridge to Toronto	293 km	384,416 steps	66 hours
Verner to Ottawa	410 km	537,920 steps	92 hours

Distances are to be used as a total step/time goal to reach during the campaign.

For more information, contact **[phone number]** or **[email address]**



Your logo here

