An Introduction

WIN Steps Facilitator’s Guide can help you design, promote and implement a step-counter or pedometer program. This guide includes a variety of tools and ideas to customize a program for you and your clients’ needs.

WIN Steps was developed after walking programs were implemented in six rural communities in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming as part of WIN (Wellness IN) the Rockies. WIN the Rockies was a community-based research, intervention and outreach project. WIN the Rockies’ mission was to assist communities in educating people to value health, respect body-size differences, enjoy the benefits of self-acceptance, enjoy physically active living, and enjoy healthful and pleasurable eating. WIN Steps promotes lifestyle physical activity and includes “lessons learned” from WIN the Rockies to help you conduct a successful walking program.

What is lifestyle physical activity?
Lifestyle physical activity includes activities that become a regular part of your day such as taking the stairs, gardening, housekeeping, shoveling the walk, or parking further and walking.

Exercise is a form of physical activity. Exercise is planned, structured, repetitive body movements done to improve or maintain physical fitness. In contrast, physical activity is any body movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure.

Research documents many benefits of regular physical activity. These are shared in the presentation *Lifestyle Physical Activity*. In summary, regular physical activity allows us to do the things we need and want to do with ease and enjoyment while also helping prevent chronic disease.

Why Use Pedometers?
According to research, pedometers and step counters provide an inexpensive way to objectively assess physical activity. Within the limits described in this section, pedometers are generally believed to be accurate and reliable. Many have a spring-suspended horizontal lever arm that moves up and down in response to movement at
the waist. A step-counter only counts steps; a pedometer has additional functions but its basic function is to count steps.

According to the Cooper Institute’s *Steps to Better Health*, a pedometer can help motivate you to be more active by doing the following:

- It will track activity by continuously monitoring the number of steps taken every day.
- It will increase awareness of your current activity level. You may discover you are more active on the weekends than during the week.
- It will help you set specific goals. Setting specific goals is important to success and a step counter can make it easy.
- It will remind you to be active. When you look at your step counter, you immediately see how close you are to your daily goal.
- It will provide immediate feedback on your efforts for increasing physical activity.

Steps are the most direct and useful information from a pedometer. A test of 10 pedometers documented they are less accurate at slower speeds because the vertical movements at the waist are less pronounced at slow walking speeds. Stride lengths vary with walking speed and are shorter at slower speeds and longer at faster speeds. Mile and kilometer readings on a pedometer are estimates and not exact since stride length varies person to person and by the walking speed.

It is important to note that calorie readings on pedometers are rough estimates based on averages. Actual kilocalories burned by individuals vary by age, height, weight, speed of movement, and duration of activity. Due to these limitations, we recommend against using the calorie reading as a measurement on which to base food consumption or physical activity decisions.

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What Does WIN Steps Facilitator’s Guide Include?

I. Coordinator Information

Information and tools are included to help you coordinate and conduct a pedometer walking program. Ideas and lessons learned from WIN the Rockies are shared.

2. Promotional Materials

This section includes a collection of quotes from walkers you can use to promote your program. In addition, you will find flyers, registration and enrollment forms and participation certificates.
3. Walk this Way: Walking Routes
   A creative group walking program is outlined for accumulated steps to “travel” around the country through every State’s capital city. The *U.S. Capitals Walk* can include any combination of or all 50 capitals for up to 18,339 miles or over 36 million steps.

4. Footnotes (Newsletters)
   Sample newsletters are provided with a template page for adding local information.

5. Participant Tracking Tools
   Log sheets for program participants are included. Both the English and Spanish versions were piloted in WIN the Rockies project communities.

6. Talk the Walk (Presentations)
   This section shares ideas and outlines for group presentations to encourage and reinforce walking.

7. Youth materials
   Two WIN the Rockies youth educational lessons are shared in this section, *Walk with Me* and *Pedometer Handbook*.

8. Evaluation
   A variety of tools for tracking participants, evaluating physical activity levels and assessing impacts of a walking program are provided.

WIN Steps Facilitator’s Guide is a collection and collaboration of many efforts. Thank you to the following educators for their assistance, ideas and creative work:

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