Tips for Coordinators

Below are some tips and pointers for planning and conducting a walking program.

1. Determine an outline for your program. These decisions include the following:
   a) length of program (8-16 weeks)
   b) number and timing of group sessions
   c) presentations for group sessions (See the Talk the Walk section for sample presentations)
   d) cost of program (consider costs of pedometers, incentives, healthful snacks, and room charges)
   e) individual and/or group goals (cumulative steps or individual steps)
   f) inclusion of other physical activities in step counts (See Step Conversions pages in the Coordinator’s Information section.)
   g) small group competitions (motivational for some people)
   h) incentives (monthly drawing from log sheets, tokens for achieving goals, end-of-program awards)

2. Promote your program to a target audience. A few ideas include flyers, paycheck stuffers, press releases, radio announcements and/or presentations to civic organizations. Another method is to find one person to wear the pedometer and recruit participants by word-of-mouth.

3. Make sure participants understand the logistics for accountability. For example: how, where and why to hand in weekly/monthly log sheets; duration of the program; and your contact information. Make it easy for participants! Consider options like convenient drop-off locations, emails, or call-ins.

4. Incorporate mid-program contacts with incentives and/or reminders. You want to reinforce the behavior, not just the outcome. If the program lasts 8 weeks, have weekly or bi-weekly contacts. If the program lasts 12-16 weeks, have at least monthly contacts.

5. Plan for evaluation. How will you know what to do better next time or what area needs improvement if you don’t evaluate? We recommend using surveys to obtain feedback. (See Evaluation section for ideas.)

6. Make yourself available via phone and/or email for problems and concerns, especially at the beginning. Participants need to know they can get advice if they feel their pedometers aren’t working or if they lose them. It doesn't take much of an "excuse" for people to drop out early.
7. Follow up, follow up, follow up! It’s easy to distribute the pedometers to a group of people interested in improving their physical activity levels. It is more difficult to stay committed to following up with phone calls, letters of encouragement, regular presentations, program wrap-up parties, etc.

Participants send me their weekly log sheets which I evaluate and send back to them, along with an “inspirational” flyer. Because I am also wearing a pedometer and filling out the log sheets, I send everyone in the group a copy of my weekly log sheets. This has been a good experience, although somewhat humiliating. . . my group consistently records more steps than I do.  
Walk Program Coordinator

8. Replace faulty* pedometers immediately with additional instructions on placement. The continuous and immediate feedback a pedometer provides is a key to its motivational impact. Conduct the 100-step test with the participant.

* Sometimes, the pedometer is not faulty; rather it is being worn incorrectly. Wear the suspect pedometer yourself before changing batteries or returning it to the manufacturer.

9. Be prepared to encourage participants who are increasing steps and those who have setbacks along the way. It is okay to have step numbers fluctuate or occasionally to forget to write steps down or to forget to wear the pedometer. Making behavior change is a process and the biggest success is to continue trying.

WIN Steps
Wellness IN the Rockies
Developed by Mary Kay Wardlaw • [www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies](http://www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies)
Dept 3354, 1000 E. University Ave
University of Wyoming • Laramie, WY 82071

You may reproduce WIN Steps for educational purposes but not for sale purposes. Please credit as follows: WIN Steps, Wellness IN the Rockies, [www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies](http://www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies)

WIN the Rockies is a community-based research, intervention and outreach project to improve health of residents in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Supported by award 0004499 through IFAFS (Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems) Competitive Grants Program/USDA.

The University of Wyoming, Montana State University, the University of Idaho and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. These universities are equal opportunity affirmative action institutions.