



# **LEADER'S GUIDE**

**Walk  
Your Way  
to a  
Healthier  
You**

**A Walking Program for Maryland**

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## Walk Your Way to a Healthier You



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# WalkWays Program Description

WalkWays is a program designed to promote walking to increase physical activity. The program is learning-centered, using dialogue learning to enable learners to become engaged in learning new information and incorporating that information into the realities of their own lives. WalkWays provides a framework for group interaction and support in beginning a walking program and addressing the challenges of sustaining that effort.

The Stages of Motivational Readiness for Change Model provides the theoretical framework of WalkWays. The model identifies a continuum of five stages of readiness involved in adopting and maintaining a new behavior. These stages include: (1) Precontemplation, (2) Contemplation, (3) Preparation, (4) Action and (5) Maintenance. The curriculum includes topics, activities and tailored messages that facilitate the learners' progression along the stages of change continuum. A text message component accompanies the curriculum to support participants in their behavior change journey.

## **The curriculum design is based on the following:**

### **Who:**

- 6-20 participants who are motivated to attend
- Limited resource adults; most are women and most have children
- Role models working with low-income adults and children (i.e. classroom teachers and caregivers)
- Adults who have difficulty increasing physical activity due to issues that include childcare, safety, time and resources
- Taught by an individual who has completed training provided by FSNE

### **Why:**

- The latest research shows that increasing physical activity has multiple effects, including decreasing the risk of chronic disease; contributing to weight maintenance; achieving a greater sense of well-being; increasing energy; improving sleep and changing physical appearance.
- Participants want to improve their health and well-being and want to become involved in a structured program that can help them be successful in increasing physical activity within their own lives.
- Participants want to be positive role models for the children they work with.

### **When:**

- This is an 8 hour program consisting of four 2-hour sessions or eight 1-hour sessions.
- These sessions are 1 or 2 weeks apart.
- One or two text messages will be sent between sessions to encourage physical activity and remind participants when and where classes will be held.
- If you will be doing eight 1-hour sessions, remember to send the dates/times to the State Office after each session.



## When Continued:

- The date and time of the program will vary. The program will be subject to seasonal variations and should not be implemented when the season hinders success of the participants.

## Where:

- Community-based settings, schools or workplaces in Maryland
- Each site will have meeting space large enough for the demonstration of physical activity and will have tables and chairs.

### *Note to educators:*

*For participant groups that spend a lot of time on their feet during the day, thus logging above average steps, consider re-organizing the lesson sequence. We suggest you consider swapping "Take Your Pulse" in Lesson 4 with "Healthier Lunches" in Lesson 2B. Please note that this diminishes the nutrition component of Lesson 2, so make this change only if it will positively impact participants in your class.*

*This curriculum uses pedometers. However, there are many devices and apps that may also be used to track steps and activity.*

- *FitBit*
- *Health Data: built-in iPhone app: go to Fitness Steps to track daily steps*
- *Stepz: free pedometer app that tracks steps, calories burned and distance traveled*
- *Walker-pedometer M7/M8/M9: free app that tracks steps, calories burned, distance, and weight*
- *Pacer: free pedometer app that has social groups that you can compete with for highest daily steps*
- *Map My Walk: free app that tracks steps, weight, sleep, calories burned, and allows you to log your daily food intake*



# WalkWays Overview Chart

Session	Lesson Content
Session 1A	The benefits of walking
	How the WalkWays program works
Session 1B	The value of stretching
	Maintaining energy balance
Session 2A	Reflecting on progress
	How to set a goal
Session 2B	Methods to increase steps
	Packing a healthy lunch
Session 3A	Reflecting on progress
	Managing your time
Session 3B	Safety and walking
	Investigating common beverages
Session 4A	Reflecting on progress
	How to monitor heart rate
Session 4B	Investigating portions versus servings
	Walking in your community
*	Send text or email messages appropriately spaced between sessions. If there are 2 weeks in between sessions, then 1 message will be sent per week, however if there is 1 week in between sessions, then 2 messages will be sent during that week.
**	Participants will be assigned a Stage of Change number (1-5) based on the preevaluation. Messages will be sent that correspond to the class's average stage of change, and will gradually increase. (Example: if the average stage of change for the class is a 2, then messages corresponding to the second stage of change will be sent first and will gradually increase over the weeks to include messages from stages 3, 4, and 5.)