



# Steps to Start Your Walking Group

Walking with other people, be they family, friends or neighbours really works! It's sociable, good for the community, keeps us motivated and helps everyone to establish a regular walking routine.

A walking group can be simply a few friends getting together weekly to walk, or something bigger like a community walking programme where walks are organised weekly for anyone to join in on.

## A Community Walking Group would usually

- Be open for people to join in
- Have walks happening weekly on safe accessible routes in the locality
- Offer walks ranging from short/easy walks (30 minutes) to longer ones
- Ensure all walks are organised well
- Have a simple organisation structure in place
- Be registered with Get Ireland Walking



## Steps to Start a Community Walking Group



### Step 1: Start Local - Start Small

Identify a nice walking route in your local area (say a 2 to 5km loop walk) and kick off walking with a small group for a few morning or evening walks.

### Step 2: Kick Start a Community Walking Group

Ask friends, colleagues and neighbours if they'd like to join or form a walking group, and drum up interest by putting up posters in local shops, post office, sports centre or community centre (see Factsheet *Getting the Word Out*)

Host a kick-off meeting in the local community centre or a public place, inviting people along who might be interested in supporting and establishing a local walking group.





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## Step 3: Agree Structure, Plan & Set Goals

Decide when, where, how long and how often you'll walk together. Identify roles within the group, group coordinator, walk leaders, etc., agree general guidelines for each walk.

Exchange contact information and agree on a starting date for the first community walk and a weekly walk schedule for the group.

Set group goals such as the number of walks you want to organise each week, the number of people you'd like to see out walking, the number of walk leaders you'd like to have, the walking distance or time you'd like to reach as a group each week or month. Encourage members to also set individual goals, like the 21-Day Walk Challenge.

Keep a record of this and review it regularly. This information can help when developing further plans for the group.



## Step 4: Register Your Group with Get Ireland Walking

Be part of the national initiative to encourage more walking across Ireland by registering your group on [www.getirelandwalking.ie](http://www.getirelandwalking.ie). You can also avail of insurance cover for your group (see *Insurance* Factsheet) and receive updates on what's happening around the country once you register.

## Step 5: Get Walking

Organise your weekly walks, taking note of the number of people walking and joining each week (see *Forms for Groups* Factsheet). Explore options for training walk leaders through your County Local Sports Partnership office.

## Step 6: Maintain Momentum - Mix it up

Keep the group interesting by joining or organising charity walks, joining 5k and 10k events, walking in new areas and linking in with other walking groups in your county or neighbouring counties (See *Going and Growing* Factsheet)

Promote your group within the community in the local paper, etc. to encourage new people to get involved.

## Step 7: Celebrate

It's a great achievement to establish a walking group and it should be celebrated! Don't miss the opportunity to have a regular social get together after a walk or walking event and celebrate your group's achievements

**Good Luck with Setting up Your Group!**

