



Promoting Physical Activity in Your Organization

Congratulations on volunteering to coordinate the *Adventists InStep for Life* initiative in your organization. If you already have an exercise initiative in your organization, you can incorporate the *Adventists InStep for Life* goals into what you are already doing. Following are suggested guidelines and ideas for promoting the physical activity component of this program.

1. Become familiar with how the program works so you can answer questions and help participants sign up.
2. Promote the *Adventists InStep for Life* program in your organization. See the *Step into Fitness and Health* PowerPoint presentation and *Adventists InStep for Life* posters, flyers and other promotional materials available at www.AdventistsInStepForLife.org.
3. Print copies of the following documents available on the “Physical Activity Miles Goal” tab of the *Adventists InStep for Life* website, to distribute to all interested persons in your organization as needed:
 - *The Health Benefits of an Active Life*
 - *Physical Activity Guidelines*
 - *Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q)*
 - *Tips for Using a Pedometer*
 - *13-Week Physical Activity Log*
 - *Monthly Physical Activity Miles Report* (for individuals who are not reporting online)
4. Make sure that each person registers online (or you can register for them, as Coordinator) in order to participate.
5. Collect names and contact information of participants (whether they registered themselves or you registered for them) so you know how many people are participating and are able to send announcements and follow-up. Enter this information on the *Physical Activity Participation List* (downloadable from the website).
6. Conduct safety screening. Have each person complete the *Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (Par-Q)*. This is a safety screening questionnaire to help people know if they need to get medical clearance before starting a walking or exercise program. If they mark “Yes” to any of the screening questions, or if they have medical concerns or questions, they should follow the instructions on the form telling them to talk to their health care provider before becoming more physically active. Have them sign the form and return it to you. Keep their signed form in a file.

7. Purchase pedometers, or encourage your participants to purchase them. You can purchase from the *Adventists InStep for Life* website or at a local sporting goods store. Encourage people just starting an exercise program to start with moderate walking. People who already have a fitness program can continue with any activities they are used to doing. Activities other than walking can be converted to aerobic miles for logging and award purposes using the “Aerobic Mile Chart” on the *Physical Activity Log*.
8. Instruct people how to wear their pedometer for best accuracy and answer any questions they have (see handout on *Tips for Using a Pedometer*). Research shows that people who wear a pedometer are more likely to increase their activity level than those who don't. It is a good motivator and gives immediate feedback on their progress.
9. Encourage each participant to get a fitness buddy to walk or exercise with. People are more likely to succeed if they have someone to walk with regularly. It may be a spouse, a teenage son or daughter, a colleague at work, a friend, or a neighbor. Encourage participants to invite their neighbors to join with them in the fitness program. What better time to share your Christian lifestyle than when walking together! If someone needs a partner, help them find someone to walk with.
10. Help participants set a walking goal. When first starting it may be only 4,000 or 5,000 steps daily. Gradually increase walking time until they can walk at least 6,000, 8,000, or 10,000 steps daily. For best health, aim for 10,000 steps a day. Help participants to convert steps into miles (2000 steps is approximately one mile). The “Aerobic Mile Chart” on the *Physical Activity Log* shows how you can convert any physical activity into mile equivalents. Demonstrate how they can do this. For example, swimming at an easy pace for 24 minutes is equal to one aerobic mile (the energy equivalent of walking a mile).
11. Encourage everyone to put their activity log in a conspicuous place (bathroom mirror, or on the refrigerator door) and write down their steps daily (or minutes or miles). Research shows that people who have exercise goals and log their results are much more likely to improve their fitness than those who don't.
12. Encourage participants to use the online reporting system at www.AdventistsInStepForLife.org to report their physical activity. If they are unable to do so, you may have participants turn in their physical activity miles to you on the *Monthly Physical Activity Miles Report*. Enter information on the *Physical Activity Miles Group Summary* form (Word or Excel format) so that you can submit online. This is important so that each participant's miles are included in the North American Division total.
13. Foster a culture where physical activity is fun. It helps keep people motivated. Here are some ideas:
 - Post total miles that your organization has walked each month in the bulletin, a newsletter, or on a bulletin board.

- Invite participants to share how exercise has made a difference in their lives.
 - Set a number of goal miles to reach as an organization.
 - Walk across your state (virtually) or to a chosen destination.
 - Create teams using family units, class rooms, Sabbath School classes, departments, or other existing groups in your organization.
 - Place a map in a strategic location to chart progress and create markers to indicate the distance that each team has walked.
14. Present awards. The *Monthly Physical Activity Miles Report* and the online reports help you know who has reached specific mileage awards (100-, 150-, 200- and 250-miles in a 13-week period; and 500-, 1000-, 1500-, and 2000-miles in a year). Pass out awards quarterly in your church. Recognition of accomplishment is a great motivator and it encourages others to start. You can download these award certificates from the *Adventists InStep for Life* website.
15. Recognize individual and group achievements. Recognition is often more powerful than any motivator, as it becomes a memory that is relived over and over. Thus, recognizing the achievements of your participants should be an important part of your organization's strategy in fighting childhood obesity. Following are a few low-cost recognition ideas:
- Have a monthly *Adventists InStep for Life* moment, during which you share stories and recognize at least one person. Interview them and capture their experience and wisdom.
 - Put up a bulletin board that highlights the accomplishments of adults and youth.
 - Compile quotes, stories and photos in a bulletin insert, newsletter article, or poster.
 - Create a homemade funny trophy that is appropriate to what is being recognized.
 - Send a letter of praise to an individual or student (this can be powerful).
 - Pass around a trophy each quarter to the highest stepper of the 13-week period.
 - Submit information about an individual's achievement to the local newspaper.
16. Lastly, summarize progress at your organization and upload your stories (and photos!) to the website to motivate others to join us in promoting health and fighting the obesity epidemic!