

the BigFit Walk

GUIDE FOR ORGANISERS



Our advice and ideas to help you organise a successful and safe walk.



The Big Fit Walk is for everyone – Health walk groups, communities, health and social care settings and workplaces. You can hold your walk any time in June. We can help you with ideas and suggestions to get you started.

Why you should organise a walking event

It's good for physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing. Walking together also helps to develop social links.

Being active (this includes walking) for 150 minutes a week can have a big impact on a number of health issues, including:

- Reduces the risk of heart disease by half
- Reduces the risk of some cancers
- Reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes
- Improves mental health and reduces the risk of depression
- Increases energy
- Can make you feel fitter and better about yourself
- Can help manage your weight

Walking is free, accessible ...and it's FUN.

Let's get started!

Follow our 4 simple steps to organise your Big Fit Walk:

- 1 Decide where you'll hold your walk
- 2 Plan how you'll look after walkers along the route
- 3 Promote your Big Fit Walk
- 4 Plan what you will do after your Big Fit Walk

Hold your walk any time in June!



4 SIMPLE STEPS TO ORGANISING A FANTASTIC BIG FIT WALK



Step 1 Decide where you'll hold your walk

Consider a theme for your walk. You could use your Big Fit Walk as a recruitment tool for new walkers, so why not ask people to bring along a friend, and maybe they will make some more along the way...

Try to make your route scenic, use local parks if you can. Large groups might need a Public Processions Licence, you can check with your local council.

Do a test run and adjust the length of the route if you need to. Aim for around 30 minutes.

Remember: the more people taking part, the longer your walk will take, and some people may walk at a slower pace than you.

Look for any potential hazards along the route and make adjustments to minimise risks.

Fill in the Risk Assessment in your organiser's pack.

Check that the route is accessible for people with mobility issues, disabilities and prams. Try to make the route as inclusive as you can.

Decide how many people you can safely cope with on your walk. Can they bring children or dogs to your event? Do you need more helpers?

Walking is a very low risk activity. Check that your organisation has Third Party Liability Insurance to cover walks.





Step 2 Plan how you'll look after walkers along the route

Allow time for everyone to complete the registration forms before the walk begins. Do a head count at the start and end.

Explain the route to the group before they set off, highlighting any surfaces, gradients and hazards they might encounter. Tell walkers about any road crossings or particular safety issues. Everyone should be encouraged to walk at their own pace and asked not to leave the group without speaking to a Walk Leader.

Before you set off check that everyone is feeling well and that no one has a medical condition or injury that could be made worse by participating.

Check that walkers have consent forms if required, such as for children. Make sure you're aware of any physical or emotional support needs within the walking group.

Appoint a Walk Leader at the front of the group and a back-marker to ensure everyone stays roughly together. If it's a big group, have more Walk Leaders available to walk in the middle of the group. Think about what you'll do if someone can't finish.

Remind walkers that it's best to wear comfortable shoes and dress for the weather.

Use the registration forms in your pack. Your walkers could win fun walking prizes!



Step 3

Promote your Big Fit Walk

Your pack includes posters, stickers and invites.

Here are some suggestions for making the most of these resources and publicising your event.

Word of mouth

Tell EVERYONE about your Big Fit Walk! Friends, family, colleagues... tell them to tell everyone they know.

Get online

- Let everyone know about your event with emails and newsletters
- Add your walk to the map on our website
- Download our images and share your event on social media. Use #bigfitwalk and link to Paths for All – see the back of this guide for our details
- Research and contact local websites that could publicise your event

Get in the news

If you'd like to invite the wider community, issue a press release for your local newspaper or radio station to spread the word. You can download a template on our website to get started.

Invite VIPs

Your local councillor, MSP and/or MP. Give them a personalised invite. It's worth seeing them at their local surgery to explain your event and how they could be involved. Make sure you're ready for press and photos if they agree to attend, and have someone look after them on the day. Thank them in writing after the event.

Posters

They're in your resource pack. Put them where there are lots of people who might see them: libraries, local shops, sports centres, community centres, schools, churches, medical centres. Ask staff in these places to draw people's attention to your walk.



Step 4

Plan what you will do after your Big Fit Walk

After all the fun, make sure that everyone gets back safely and feels well. How about arranging somewhere to socialise afterwards?

A cup of tea or a drink of juice always goes down well! Thank everyone for coming and for helping to make your event a success. Encourage them to join their local health walk and to make walking a regular part of their week.

You can find details of local health walks on the Paths for All website at www.pathsforall.org.uk/walking-for-health/health-walks

If walkers want more information about starting a health walk or training to be a Volunteer Walk Leader, we can help with this too. Just visit our website.

Make sure you fill in the evaluation survey that we'll email to you. If you took photos on the walk, make sure you got permission to use them.

Post your registration forms to us. Remember, your walkers could win some fun walking goodies!

You could download certificates from our website to give out to your walkers and helpers. This could be a lovely way to thank everyone for coming and raise your profile.

Share your news. We'd be delighted to hear all about your walk, so please send us your stories and photos. You could write up a short news story and send it to your local newspaper along with some photos. This is a great way to thank everyone for helping and coming along.



The Big Fit Walk is about having fun and staying healthy. Here are some top tips and suggestions to help make staying healthy even more fun and appealing.

Take the dog for an extra 10 minutes walk (even if you don't have a dog, why not borrow a friend's).

Park the car a bit further away from where you're going. It's a great way to fit in extra steps.

Stroll over to speak to a colleague in person at work, instead of email.

Why not get off the bus a stop or two early?

Leave the car at home: walk to work or the local shops.

Why not use the stairs instead of the lift or escalator?



Good luck! We can't wait to hear all about your Big Fit Walk!

Join the big conversation #bigfitwalk. We'd love to see your photos and hear your stories. You can share them with us on social media.

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