

Walk yourself
happy

Heart Foundation Walking



Walk Organiser handbook

Seventh edition



Welcome to Heart Foundation Walking



Congratulations on your decision to become a volunteer Walk Organiser with Heart Foundation Walking. This handbook contains everything you need to get your walking group started and keep it going over the longer term.

Research shows being regularly active throughout life is one of the most effective ways to improve and protect your heart health, and walking is one of Australia's favourite way of being physically active.

Walking in a group has even more benefits, as it helps you stay motivated, meet new friends and feel connected in your local community. Evidence suggests good social support can help safeguard against heart disease and stroke.

As a Walk Organiser, you play a key role in supporting others to become physically active on a regular basis. Organising your own Walking group can help many people improve their heart health and well-being in a fun and friendly environment.

Thank you for joining Heart Foundation Walking. I trust you and your walking group will enjoy all its benefits.

Adj Prof John G Kelly AM
Chief Executive Officer
National Heart Foundation of Australia

Proudly supported by



Australian Government



Queensland Government

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If you have any questions, please contact your Heart Foundation Walking Local Coordinator.

Name of my Local Coordinator: _____

Contact telephone number: _____

Contact email: _____



Why walking?

Walking is the number one activity most Australian adults do on a regular basis.

Walking:

- suits people of all ages and fitness levels
- can be done just about anywhere
- is free!
- has very low risk of injury
- doesn't require any special equipment or training.

Our Heart Foundation Walking groups make walking a social activity. When you walk in a group, you can talk while you walk and get to know your neighbours and neighbourhood.

Being active on a regular basis is a great way to look after your heart health.

Regular physical activity helps:

- reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and dementia
- manage weight, blood pressure and cholesterol
- prevent and control diabetes
- reduce your risk of developing some cancers
- maintain your bone density, reducing your risk of osteoporosis and fractures
- improve balance and coordination, reducing your risk of falls and other injuries.

It also helps you reduce stress and feel more alert, and boost self-confidence and mood.



FROM OUR WALKERS:

"I have made new friends and we socialise outside of walking, my health has improved, I can walk safely and always have a laugh."

*Walk yourself
happy*

What is Heart Foundation Walking?

Heart Foundation Walking is Australia's largest free walking network with walking groups led by volunteer Walk Organisers, and a virtual community of walkers who track their activity via our Heart Foundation Walking app.

Community Walking Groups

Walking groups can be any size and walk at various times, days, distances and levels of difficulty. Everyone is encouraged to walk at their own pace.

As a Volunteer Walk Organiser, you decide the route, times and days for the walks, act as the main point of contact for group members and help the Heart Foundation stay in touch with all our walkers.

Walking solo

You and your group members can be part of Heart Foundation Walking by downloading our free app, available for Apple or Android. The app will help you keep track of your steps, connect to health information and take part in special campaigns and events online.



FROM A WALK ORGANISER:

"I'm always receiving positive feedback on how the walks are helping people in the community with issues such as social isolation, confidence levels, meeting new people and getting fitter. I feel very privileged to be part of this program."

FROM OUR WALKERS:

"Walking is really something special. Sometimes you meet other people who are walking around and you start talking - it's great."



"I started posting every time I was doing a walk on social media and found people commenting publicly and private messaging me. The feedback was really spurring me on and now, I have friends in every state walking each day and challenging each other, holding each other accountable".
Virtual walker, Craig Riley

"I feel fantastic! I have the motivation to get up and go and am doing things that I could not do before, and it has turned my life around".

Marg from the Ellendale Walkers, Tasmania

Why start a Heart Foundation Walking group?

Heart Foundation Walking is designed to help people enjoy regular physical activity.

The program provides:

- an easy, accessible way to stay physically active
- social contact and community spirit
- a safe way to be healthy
- regular newsletters and health information
- encouragement and incentives to stay motivated
- invitations to special walk events.

Member benefits

Walker Recognition Scheme. The Walker Recognition Scheme is designed to help motivate Walkers to start walking and keep walking. See page 7 for rewards.

Participant newsletter. The newsletter includes updates on the program, information about physical activity and heart health, healthy recipes and news from groups all around Australia.

Track your progress online. Walking group members can access their password-protected online profile for their walking numbers. Solo walkers can track their steps using our Heart Foundation Walking app - which syncs to Apple Health, Google Fit or Fitbit.



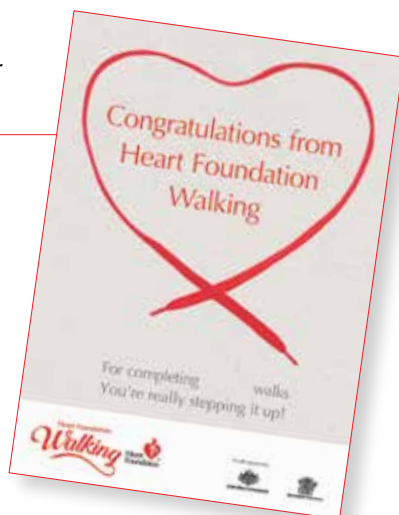
Milestone	Walker Recognition Scheme rewards
25 group walks	Certificate \$5.00 voucher for Heart Foundation Walking Merchandise
50 group walks	Certificate \$10.00 voucher for Heart Foundation Walking Merchandise
100 group walks	Certificate Commemorative pin \$15.00 voucher for Heart Foundation Walking Merchandise
200 group walks	Certificate Commemorative pin \$20.00 voucher for Heart Foundation Walking Merchandise
500 group walks	Certificate Commemorative pin \$25.00 voucher for Heart Foundation Walking Merchandise
1000 group walks	Certificate Commemorative pin 1000 walk club member Polo Shirt

Note: The Walker Recognition Scheme is only available to Walkers registered with a Heart Foundation Walking group. Only walks conducted with a Heart Foundation Walking group are recorded as part of the Walker Recognition Scheme.

To be included in the Walker Recognition Scheme, you must tick the Walker Recognition Scheme box when you register. Solo walkers are rewarded for reaching step milestones through campaigns on our Heart Foundation Walking app.

For more information visit walking.heartfoundation.org.au.

"It was those little incentives that kept me going and aiming for the next goal until I made walking a part of my lifestyle. We've talked about this in our group a number of times and everyone agrees".





Becoming a Walk Organiser

The benefits of being a Walk Organiser

Our volunteer Walk Organisers are the reason Heart Foundation Walking has helped so many Australians stay active and take better care of their heart health. As well as regular physical and social activity (not to mention our gratitude), Heart Foundation Walk Organisers receive:

Walk Organiser training

Once you complete your registration, you will be provided a link to the Walk Organiser online training. Your Local Coordinator can assist you with this training and, once complete, you and your group can start walking.



A thank you gift. We value the dedication and enthusiasm of our Walk Organisers. As a token of our appreciation, all our Walk Organisers receive some free Heart Foundation Walking merchandise. Simply tell us your preference at registration.

Great prizes for you and your group

Heart Foundation Walking provide an online profile from which you can record your walking group's attendance. This helps us keep track of Walkers' achievements and provide incentives under the Walker Recognition Scheme.



What's involved?

Walk Organisers play a key part in the success of Heart Foundation Walking – they are the glue that holds our walking groups together. This is an overview of what's involved in the role.

Getting started

Register as a Walk Organiser. Complete a Walk Organiser registration form online at walking.heartfoundation.org.au/walking/start-your-own-group or by emailing it to us at walking@heartfoundation.org.au. When you register, you'll be asked to nominate a Local Coordinator from a drop-down list. This is the person who will be your local contact on behalf of Heart Foundation Walking. If there is no Local Coordinator in your area, please call us on 13 11 12.

You can choose to make your group public or private - if you select private, your group won't be promoted on our website to potential new members.

Complete basic training. All our Walk Organisers need to complete a basic training session, which covers general information on walking and your role as Walk Organiser. Once you've registered, we'll send you the link to the training session via email. When you complete your training your group will be approved and we'll send your complimentary Heart Foundation Walking welcome pack.

At a glance

Basic training and organisation

- Register as a Walk Organiser with Heart Foundation Walking.
- Complete the online training.
- Plan your walking routes.
- Register your Walkers.





Getting organised

Plan your walking routes. A great walking route is about more than just picturesque scenery – it's about planning a walk that's accessible and safe for everyone. It's important you pre-plan your walks and be familiar with the terrain, so you can lead your group and avoid any potential hazards along the way. Note details such as how far the walk is, how long it takes, if there are public facilities available, and where a clearly defined meeting point is.



Gather a group. Once you've decided on the days, times and routes of your walks, it's time to get people to join you. You can encourage Walkers to join your group online; you can do this for them if required. Alternatively, they can complete a Walker registration form and return it to Heart Foundation Walking by email or post.

If someone arrives to walk but is not a Heart Foundation Walking member, ask them to join online. You can do this on the spot if you, or they, have a smart phone. Alternatively, give them a Walkers registration form and ask them to complete and return it before the next walk.

If they are not registered, they can still walk but please ask them to

- (a) read and agree to be bound by the Walker Terms and Conditions prior to the walk
- b) or, make the following verbal statement: "If you are not registered you can walk with us but please note that you do so entirely at your sole risk and responsibility. We encourage you to sign up with us because then you become eligible for Walker participation benefits under our Walker Registration Scheme."



This statement should be made each time a non-registered person intends participating in a walk with your Group.

Being a role model for your group

Promote a healthier lifestyle. As a Walk Organiser, you're a role model and it's important to encourage your Walkers to stick to their personal goal of leading a more active, healthy lifestyle. As an ambassador for the Heart Foundation, we ask you to help us promote our messages about healthy living, including being smoke-free and eating well. If Walkers have specific questions about their own health, please refer them to the Heart Foundation Helpline on 13 11 12 (cost of a local call) or to their own health professional.

Be punctual for walks. It's important to turn up to walks on time (or better still, a little early). This allows you to give your group sufficient time to warm up and cool down, including some simple stretches (see page 23).

Dress for the occasion. We ask you to encourage all your Walkers to wear comfortable, sun-smart clothing on walks, including covered shoes, a hat, sunscreen and a name badge. Wearing your Heart Foundation Walking shirt and hat will help identify you to new Walkers and may help attract new people to your group.

Be safe when walking. Advise Walkers of any hazards along the route, and make sure no-one is overdoing it. A general rule is that people should be able to talk while they are walking. See page 27 for more detailed safety information.



"Try to accumulate 2.5–5 hours of moderate intensity physical activity every week."

Free health information

Call the Heart Foundation Helpline in 13 11 12 to speak to health professionals and receive information and guidance on your heart health and general wellbeing.

Follow regulations and policies concerning dogs. If dogs are likely to be part of your group, you'll need to find out if your local council permits them on the walking path, and if there are any other regulations governing dogs. It's important to let all your Walkers know if and when dogs will be joining your group, and all dog owners must read and comply with our 'Walking with Dogs' guidelines on page 26. On the walk, dog owners need to pay attention to their dogs at all times.

If your Walking route takes you onto private property it is important to obtain permission from the property owner prior to taking dogs onto those premises.

Specialty groups

You will be asked to indicate on your registration form the type of Walking group you are starting. Some groups choose to have a specialty – for example, some groups are specifically for slower Walkers, parents with prams, workplaces or residents of over 50s lifestyle villages. Others walk indoors (e.g. in a shopping centre), or as part of the activity program for a school or other organisation. Private groups may include workplace groups or groups that are not promoted to the general public. If your group has a specialty, please ensure you indicate this when you register and let your Local Coordinator know so that they can advise potential Walkers appropriately.

A little administration

Keep details up-to-date. As a Heart Foundation Walk Organiser, your contact details will be used so that interested Walkers can get in contact with you and your group. At registration, you will be asked to list your preferred method of contact.



Please ensure you maintain your contact details via your Heart Foundation Walking online profile. You can make these changes yourself or email us directly.

Attendance Records. To ensure your Walkers are acknowledged through our Walker Recognition Scheme, it's important to note the attendance of Walkers. The quickest and easiest way to do this is online. Although we encourage people to walk as often as possible, only walks conducted with your Heart Foundation Walking group count for Attendance Record purposes.

Easy ways to promote your Walking group

One of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of being a Walk Organiser is seeing people enjoy being healthy and active on a regular basis.

If you would like help attracting new Walkers, please discuss this with your Local Coordinator. Strategies for promoting your group may include:

Word of mouth. Tell everyone you know about the program, ask Walkers to invite a friend and/or speak to local community groups. A personal invitation is an excellent way to attract new members

Flyers and posters. These are available to download online or your Local Coordinator can provide you with flyers and posters to distribute to local letterboxes, clubs, doctors, health professionals and shopping centres. If you want to distribute flyers to letterboxes in your area, please do not place them in letterboxes with a 'no junk mail' or similar sign.

You may wish to keep your group private so that it is not open publicly for new members. This is fine - just make sure you select 'private' when you register your group.

We're here to help

If you need any assistance with managing your group or the website you can always contact us on 13 11 12 or walking@heartfoundation.org.au.

The Frequently Asked Questions section of our website also has a website user guide as well as handy tips on the program.



How to keep everyone happy

One of the biggest challenges for Walk Organisers is maintaining everyone's enthusiasm for Walking. It's often difficult for people to stick to a regular physical activity program, and many drop out within the first three to six months. Don't be disheartened if some people drop out. However, to help people make walking a regular habit, here are a few suggestions.



Plan varied and interesting routes

For example, if you walk regularly on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, you may like to have a different route for each day. Use interesting landmarks and walking trails.

Encourage suggestions from your group

Walkers often have some good ideas for walking routes and social outings. Encourage people to make suggestions.

Promote the Heart Foundation Walking Walker Recognition Scheme

Be sure to complete your group's Attendance Records each month, so that Walkers can receive their appropriate recognition (see page 7). If you think a particular Walker needs a bit of extra encouragement, there is a recognition certificate template that can be downloaded online or you can discuss strategies to support the Walker further with your Local Coordinator.



Make sure your walks are welcoming

A consistent meeting point and time will help Walkers feel more confident about turning up to each walk (it's important to let your group, Local Coordinator and the Heart Foundation know if these details change).

Welcome new members and introduce them to the group. Pair up new members with experienced Walkers and encourage your group to wear name tags to help get people talking. You can obtain name tags from your Local Coordinator. Be flexible and accommodating to individual needs and requirements.

A helping hand

If your group is quite large, or you foresee problems making it to the scheduled walk times, you may want to consider recruiting a second Volunteer Walk Organiser for your group. Additional Walk Organisers can fill in when you can't make it or share the role on a regular basis, whatever works best for your group. Please contact us on 13 11 12 or via email to set up a secondary Walk Organiser.

Some benefits of having an additional Walk Organiser include:

Looking after the group when you're away. If you're on holidays, sick or unable to attend a planned session, an additional Walk Organiser can look after the group for you.

Keeping slower Walkers company. Having an additional Walk Organiser helps everybody in the group to feel included, especially new or slower members.



Quick tips

Something special

As well as your normal walking routes, you might consider planning some special walking events. Some ideas:

- visit other local Heart Foundation Walking groups to walk together or invite them to visit you
- go for a sunrise, moonlight, beach or special theme walk
- invite a special guest (e.g. your local MP or councillor, a local GP or physiotherapist, a local history or environment expert) to join you for the walk and perhaps give a short talk to the group
- combine a walk with a picnic or morning tea
- catch public transport to discover a new park or a fun new walking destination
- organise a walking fundraiser for the Heart Foundation.

Reducing your workload. While the workload of being a Walk Organiser is not heavy, it helps to share it, especially for larger groups. For example, one Walk Organiser might take responsibility for welcoming new people and leading warm-ups, while another promotes the group and deals with recording attendance.

Supporting the group. Moral support and encouragement in organising the group and sharing ideas to promote the group and attract new members.

Having another point of contact. Sometimes you may be away or not contactable. Having more than one contact person makes it easier for interested new Walkers to join your group.



Making the most of your walks

How to plan a successful walking route

To attract people to your Walking group, choose a route that is pleasant and interesting. Parkland and green space are always a great option, but you can also consider including local or historical landmarks. You may even like to have a few different walk routes, although it's a good idea to use the same meeting point each time to avoid confusion.

To appeal to different ages and fitness levels, choose a walk that takes 30–90 minutes at a brisk, but comfortable pace. Safety is also a key issue when deciding a route. You can help to make your group safer before you start your walks. To help you decide if your walk is suitable, there are a number of things to consider.

There are useful tools for planning your walking route in the 'Tips and tools' section of your online profile.



How's your 'hood'?

Our Neighbourhood Walkability Checklist is a tool that asks community residents to be the 'eyes and feet' of their local council to provide feedback on the 'walkability' of their neighbourhoods.

Local residents often know and understand their neighbourhoods very well. Their feedback can assist planners and professionals in local government to identify features that support or discourage residents from walking for transport or recreation.

To request a copy of the checklist, call 13 11 12 or find it in the 'Tips and tools' section of your online profile.

Things to consider when planning your walk

Name of walk: _____

Suburb of walk: _____

- Are there uneven areas of pavement or other uneven surfaces?
- Are there surfaces that are slippery when they are wet?
- Are there any dangerous road crossings or areas where it is necessary to walk on the road?
- Are walkways accessible for people with prams, in wheelchairs or with walking aids?
- Is the route well lit (if Walking at night or early morning)?
- Is there access to telephones to call for help if needed (e.g. public phones), or will you or one of your Walkers carry a mobile phone?
- Is the terrain suitable for Walkers of all fitness levels or are alternative routes available for less fit Walkers?
- Are there seats where less fit Walkers can rest if necessary?
- If Walking during daylight hours, are the route and meeting point shaded?
- Are there any other obvious potential hazards such as magpies or unrestrained dogs?
- Are there sections which are shared paths for cyclists and Walkers?
- Is there access to drinking water (e.g. drinking fountains)?
- Is there access to public toilets? The national public toilet map is available in the 'Tips and tools' section of your online profile.



If you do note any potential hazards or problems on your walk route, consider whether a safer route or walk time is available and suitable. For example, you could change the meeting time to improve the shade on your route, or eliminate a hazardous road crossing by choosing a different route.

Contact your local council if there is a problem related to public health or safety (e.g. broken pathways, obstacles on pathways, presence of dangerous dogs or lack of public facilities such as water fountains or seats). Contact your local council (or the owner of the property you're walking on, if privately owned) if there is a problem related to health or safety.

Let Walkers know about possible hazards. For example, it may be necessary to walk on a shared cycle path for some of your walk. If so, you can remind Walkers to keep to the left side of the path and be aware of the sound of approaching cyclists. If you are unsure about any of the safety features of your walk route or ways to address them, your Local Coordinator can help.



How much walking is enough?

Common questions

Some of my Walkers aren't that fit.

Is it safe for them to walk?

If your Walkers are new to physical activity or have not been active for some time, remember that some moderate activity is better than none. If they start at the level that is right for them, and build up slowly, they're more likely to successfully reach the goal of being active every day. Many people start out too vigorously and then give up being active because they find it too demanding.



Common sense is the best guide. Please ensure that all Walkers have completed their Walker Registration Form. Advise Walkers to consult with their own health professional if unsure about participating in the walk.

What's the safest way to encourage my Walkers to become more active?

A good general guide is to encourage them to do a little more than they are accustomed to and increase the amount and frequency gradually. For example, if a Walker rarely does any physical activity (e.g. walks the dog once a week, plays an occasional game of golf), suggest they start by walking for 10 or 15 minutes, three or four times a week at a comfortable level. After a few weeks, they should find that they can walk a little further and faster, and may want to gradually increase the frequency to five, six or seven times a week.

Should I dictate the pace of the walk?

While it's good to encourage your Walkers to improve, it's important not to push people to walk faster than is safe for them. Try to find ways to ensure that no-one has to walk alone. For example, encourage Walkers to pair off, nominate a "Tail-End Charlie" for each walk, or include a shorter alternative route for slower or less fit Walkers. Walk at your own pace – it is definitely not a race!



What's a good indication people are walking fast enough to gain the benefits?

The talk test is a good rule of thumb for teaching group members how fast to walk. While walking, they should be able to talk without puffing too much or making themselves breathless or uncomfortable. However, it's important they don't dawdle but keep walking fast enough to raise their heart rate.

Another way to judge how fast to walk is to ask your group to rate how they feel on a scale of zero to 10 (where zero is resting and 10 is working very, very hard). To get a health benefit without pushing too hard, when walking they should feel somewhere between three (moderate) and six (somewhat hard).

Warming up and stretching

A gentle warm-up followed by some simple stretching is a good way to improve flexibility, prepare muscles for being active and may prevent injuries. We recommend you include a warm-up and stretch at the start of every walk and, when possible, at the end. Remind Walkers to ensure that:

- a) warm up and stretch routines do not exceed what they can safely and comfortably do
- b) they must take all precautions appropriate for their level of ability.

As a Walk Organiser, be a good example to your group by leading warm up exercises and stretches. However, do not force anyone to stretch if they do not wish to. If anyone requests specific advice about stretching related to an injury or problem, please refer them to their doctor or health professional.



Warming up. Before setting off with your group, take about five minutes to allow circulation to increase gradually and muscles to warm up. You and your group can do this by walking on the spot, or doing the first five minutes of the walk at a slower than usual pace. Some people warm up by walking from home to the meeting point for their walk. A light sweat is a good indication your body is warm.

Stretching. Stretching increases flexibility, eases muscular aches and pains, and may help prevent injuries. When stretching, remember:

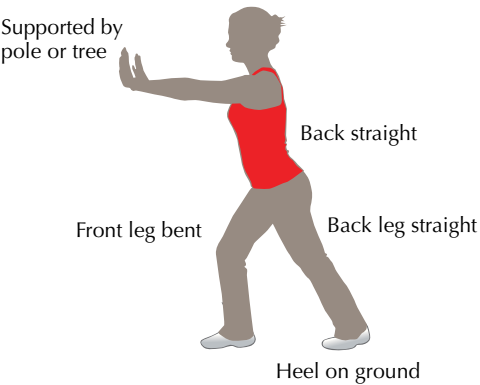
- warm up your muscles before stretching
- stretch slowly and ease in and out of each posture
- hold each stretch for 10–30 seconds
- try to stay steady to avoid muscle injury
- stretching should never be painful. Stretch to the point of mild discomfort (so you can ‘feel it’), but not pain. Pain indicates you are pushing yourself too hard
- for maximum benefit, repeat each stretch three to four times
- stretch the same number of times on each side.

Some example stretches are shown on the next page.



Examples of stretches

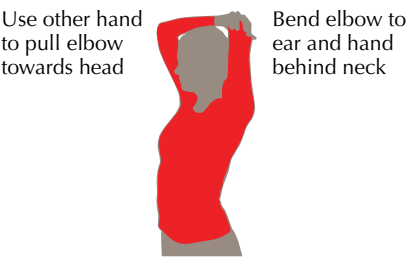
Calf stretch



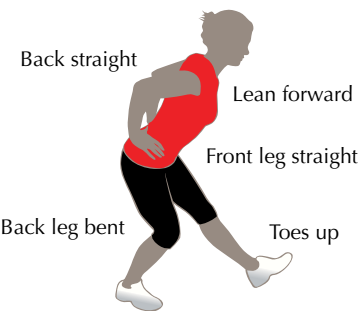
Quadricep stretch



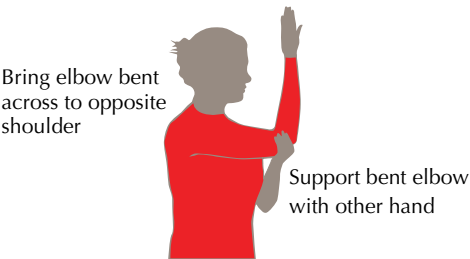
Tricep stretch



Hamstring stretch



Shoulder stretch





Essential information

Insurance and risk management

The Heart Foundation maintains an insurance policy that may provide coverage for volunteer Walk Organisers if:

- a. they are acting as a Heart Foundation volunteer and
- b. they have complied with all applicable requirements of that insurance policy.

It's important that you note the following points:

- Ensure Walkers have read the terms and conditions for participating in Heart Foundation Walking. If a new Walker turns up, please show them the Terms and Conditions or, alternatively, direct them to walking.heartfoundation.org.au. All Walk Organisers are provided with a wallet card and other resources that detail the Terms and Conditions that will enable you to have these on hand at the walk.

You can ask new Walkers to read these terms and conditions before the walk or advise them verbally, "If you are not registered you can walk with us but please note that you do so entirely at your sole risk and responsibility. If you enjoy your walk, please register online or I can provide you with a Walker's kit".

- Take reasonable care to minimise risk of injury (see page 27). Walkers should be instructed to walk at their own pace. Keep the group together when you walk; make your walks suitable for the least fit person; or have an additional Walk Organiser stay back with slower Walkers. Ensure that no-one is left to walk alone.



- Dog owners are solely responsible for any injury or damage their dog may cause to any Walker, person or property. The Walk Organiser must ensure that Walkers with dogs comply at all times with the obligations relating to the inclusion of dogs (see page 26).
- To be covered by insurance, walks should not exceed two hours (120 minutes).
- The insurance policy that may provide coverage for volunteer Walk Organisers only covers the duration of the actual walking session, not social activities before or after the walk.
- Complete the Attendance Record online or submit the pre-printed paper log each month.
- If an incident does occur during a walk with a Walker or Walk Organiser, please contact us on 13 11 12 to complete an Incident Report Form as soon as possible. You must report all incidents, even if no-one is injured.

Walking with children

Some Heart Foundation Walking groups are especially for 'Parents with Prams', with the walking route planned to be pram friendly; however, most groups welcome everyone. If your group's walk is pram friendly, ensure this is noted on the Heart Foundation Walking website to help parents find a suitable group to join.





Walking with dogs

Dogs can be a great inclusion in Heart Foundation Walking groups, as they are often beneficial for the commitment and motivation of their owners.

For the safety and comfort of all those participating in the walk, the Walk Organiser should ensure that the owner:

- has the dog wearing a valid ID and registration tag
- has the dog on a leash at all times
- is prepared and able to keep physical control of the dog at all times
- abides by any regulations in the area regarding dogs
- is prepared to clean up after their dog.

The Walk Organiser should make it clear to all dog owners that these requirements must be met, and if they are not their dog will not be able to walk with them. If issues arise with a particular dog's behaviour, the Walk Organiser should ask the owner not to bring the dog to future walks, and report any issues in an Incident Report by phoning us on 13 11 12. If the dog owner persists in bringing the dog with them to program walks, the owner will be asked not to attend future walks (failing which exclusion of the Walker from Heart Foundation Walking may be imposed).



Important safety tips

Seek appropriate medical advice. If you have a medical condition and/or you are significantly increasing your level of activity by undertaking Heart Foundation Walking activities, you must ask your health professional whether it is safe for you to participate.

We recognise this is inconvenient for some Walkers, especially those who are already active. However, it is an essential part of the program's risk management strategy and will help to ensure all Walkers have a safe, enjoyable experience. Please remember the Walk Organiser is a volunteer who facilitates the walk – it is not their role to provide medical advice or an individual fitness program. If your health or circumstances change, you must see your health professional to confirm it is still safe for you to participate.

Please note for privacy reasons, you do not need to provide your medical information to the Heart Foundation.

Manage medical conditions carefully. If you have a medical condition that could be affected by activity (like heart disease, angina, high blood pressure, diabetes or asthma), you must carefully monitor any symptoms (e.g. breathlessness, low blood sugar or pain) that may be made worse. If you are on medication for your condition, ensure you have taken your medication correctly before undertaking activity and/or carry as appropriate (discuss this with your doctor), and walk at your own pace, being careful not to overdo it.



"Avoid being active when it is extremely hot, cold or humid. It is also wise to avoid walking during the hottest part of the day."

It is always recommended you speak with your health professional before starting any new physical activity. For any health enquiries and questions about heart disease or dietary information, contact our Heart Foundation Helpline on 13 11 12 and/or contact your health professional.

Stop if you need to. Naturally, we want to encourage you to be as active as possible. However, you should be familiar with the warning signs and know when to stop the activity. Please remember:

- to seek medical help if you become breathless or uncomfortable while doing any activity. Slow down, stop and discuss with your doctor as soon as you can
- if you have been prescribed angina-relieving medication, carry it with you when you are being active and follow your doctor's advice for its use
- to avoid being active if you have an acute illness (e.g. flu or bronchitis) or injury (e.g. sprained ankle or pulled muscle) or have had recent surgery. Ask your doctor's advice about returning to your walking group
- finally, to avoid being active when it is extremely hot, cold or humid. It is also wise to avoid walking during the hottest part of the day.

Know the warning signs of heart attack and what to do.

It is important that all Walkers know the warning signs of heart attack and the action to take if anyone in your group is experiencing warning signs. Each year there are approximately 55,000 heart attacks in Australia – that is 150 every day or 1 every 10 minutes. Heart attacks claim one Australian life every 53 minutes and more than 50% of heart attack deaths occur before the person reaches hospital.



With heart attacks, every minute counts. The sooner you recognise the warning signs and call Triple Zero (000), the less damage is done to the heart muscle and the greater the chance of survival.

The warning signs of heart attack:

- Discomfort or pain in the centre of your chest:
 - heaviness, tightness or pressure
 - the discomfort may spread.
- Discomfort in other parts of your upper body:
 - arm/s, shoulder/s, neck, jaw or back.
- You may also feel:
 - short of breath, nauseous, a cold sweat, dizzy or light-headed.
- Someone having a heart attack may:
 - appear pale
 - look like they are having trouble breathing
 - look uncomfortable
 - be sweating a lot.

Warning Signs – what to do

1. **STOP and rest now**

- Help the person to immediately stop what they are doing and rest.

2. **TALK tell someone how you feel**

- Ask the person to tell you what they are feeling.
- If their symptoms are severe, get worse quickly or have lasted for 10 minutes.

3. **CALL Triple Zero (000) now! and chew 300mg aspirin, unless you have an allergy to aspirin or your doctor has told you not to take it**

- Ask for an ambulance. Don't hang up. Wait for the operator's instructions.



Call '000'
Your best chance
of survival
It's OK to call

At a glance

Take care while walking by:

- seeking appropriate medical advice
- managing medical conditions carefully
- stopping if you need to
- not overdoing it
- being prepared for walking
- observing appropriate considerations when walking with children or dogs.

Will you recognise your heart attack?



Do you feel any

pain

pressure

heaviness

tightness

In one or more of your

chest

neck

jaw

arm/s

back

shoulder/s

You may also feel

nauseous

a cold sweat

dizzy

short of breath

Yes

1 STOP and rest now

2 TALK tell someone how you feel

If you take angina medicine

- Take a dose of your medicine.
- Wait 5 minutes. Still have symptoms? Take another dose of your medicine.
- Wait 5 minutes. Symptoms won't go away?

Are your symptoms severe or getting worse?

or

Have your symptoms lasted 10 minutes?

Yes

3 CALL 000* and chew 300mg aspirin, unless you have an allergy to aspirin or your doctor has told you not to take it

*Triple Zero

- Ask for an ambulance.
- Don't hang up.
- Wait for the operator's instructions.

*If calling Triple Zero (000) does not work on your mobile phone, try 112.

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A copy of this action plan can be downloaded or ordered from www.heartattackfacts.org.au or by calling 13 11 12.

Frequently asked questions

Why does the registration form request so much information?

The information requested on the registration form is essential to allow us to administer and evaluate the program. If you or your Walkers have any concerns about providing any particular information, please call your Local Coordinator or the Heart Foundation on 13 11 12.

Will I be asked to pay or make donations to the Heart Foundation?

This is a free program so everyone can join. There is no obligation to donate or raise funds, but donations are welcome and will help us continue our lifesaving research and health education work. If you request to receive the Heart Foundation Walking newsletter, fundraising information will occasionally be included. If you would like to make a donation, or volunteer to help the Heart Foundation, please call us on 13 11 12 for more information. Your support will make a difference.

Is any research being conducted through Heart Foundation Walking?

The Heart Foundation is committed to thoroughly evaluating Heart Foundation Walking. Mail, email, telephone or face-to-face surveys may be conducted from time to time. Participation in research is not compulsory and you have the right to refuse to take part, or withdraw at any point, without penalty. However, we value your views and feedback, and recognise that good evaluation can assist us to deliver a better program.



What if I want to leave Heart Foundation Walking?

Please notify your Local Coordinator and the Heart Foundation on 13 11 12 or walking@heartfoundation.org.au. Please encourage any group members interested in taking over as Walk Organiser to contact the Local Coordinator and the Heart Foundation on 13 11 12. Please also notify your Local Coordinator and the Heart Foundation if you change your address, or want to change any of the details of your walking group.

Can I be in more than one group?

Yes, you can do this online or we can do it for you.

Does the Heart Foundation offer public liability insurance for Walkers?

Walkers are not covered by public liability insurance. By signing the registration form, Walkers agree to enter Heart Foundation Walking at their own risk and not to hold the Heart Foundation, government and other agencies or the Local Coordinator's organisation responsible for any loss, damage, expense or personal injury sustained from participation. Each Walker also agrees that they are aware of and understand the additional risks that dogs may cause, they voluntarily accept those risks and acknowledge that the Heart Foundation is excluding all liability for injuries or damage caused as a result of including dogs in Heart Foundation Walking.



What if I can't attract people to join my group?

The Heart Foundation and your Local Coordinator can provide resources and assistance. You may also want to consider whether your walk time and route are suitable for potential Walkers.

What if I have more questions?

Ask your Local Coordinator or call the Heart Foundation on 13 11 12. For questions about your own health, please consult your health professional.

Where can I find the Walk Organiser and Walker Terms and Conditions?

The current Walk Organiser and Walker Terms and Conditions can be found at walking.heartfoundation.org.au/terms-and-conditions.

How do I access my online profile?

Visit walking.heartfoundation.org.au and choose 'Log in'.



Merchandise



Polo top



T-shirts



Hoodie



Sport cap



Sling bag back pack



Drink/sport bottle



Shoelaces



Fit Walk pedometer



Socks



'Hearty' unisex beanie

Please visit walking.heartfoundation.org.au for our full range of merchandise.
Items are subject to availability.



**Heart Foundation
HELPLINE
13 11 12**

**Free heart health information and
support is a phone call away.**

**heartfoundation.org.au/support
health@heartfoundation.org.au**



If you need an interpreter,
call **131 450** and ask for
the Heart Foundation.



Contact us

walking@heartfoundation.org.au

13 11 12

walking.heartfoundation.org.au

Facebook: @HFWalking

Instagram: @Heartfoundationwalking



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