



Site Manager Guide

<http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>



Walk Across Texas Overview

Walk Across Texas is a physical activity program created in 1996 by Texas AgriLife Extension Service to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of walking.

Someone in your organization will be appointed as the Site Manager for Walk Across Texas. The Site Manager will find Team Captains. The Team Captains then recruit seven people for their team.

Once teams of eight are formed, a “Kick-Off” event marks the beginning of the program. People walk together or individually, outside or at a mall or gym, on a treadmill—any way that fits their lifestyle. Teams compete for eight weeks to see which one walks the 830 miles across the state first and which one walks the greatest amount of miles.

Team Captains report their team members’ mileage each week, and it is posted on an on-line map or on a Texas road map somewhere in your organization. Some groups sponsor an activity after four weeks to keep everyone motivated. Everyone is recognized for their accomplishments at the “Recognition” activity at the end of the eight weeks.

We hope you and others in your organization will not only develop the habit of walking but also have a wonderful time walking across Texas!

Contact information for your county Extension agent:

Agent Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Updated January 2008.

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Walk Across Texas Steps to Success for Community Organizations

Step 1. Identify a Site Manager(s) and Team Captains.

Site managers are persons within your organization who manage the Walk Across Texas process and serve as the point of contact for your county Extension agent. Site managers also recruit Team Captains, who sign-up seven team members.

Step 2. Form a Site Task Force (optional).

With larger organizations, task force members can each take responsibility for:

- publicity and marketing,
- recruitment,
- training Captains,
- events, and
- motivational activities, incentives/gifts, recognition certificates, proclamations, and optional activities such as Health Breaks classes, Weight Loss Series, or newsletters.

Step 3. Set Dates and Plan.

Things to plan for include:

- Site Manager training by the county Extension agent;
- recruiting Team Captains and members;
- Team Captain training;
- publicity and marketing;
- team registration;
- events, such as the Kick-Off, Midway/Keep Going, and Recognition; and
- motivational activities, incentives/gifts, recognition certificates, proclamations, and optional activities such as Health Breaks classes, Weight Loss Series, or newsletters.

Step 4. Order or Make Team Packets.

Order the number of team packets you think will be needed for your organization from your county Extension agent, or if you have no agent in your county, make your own packets. To make your own packets, go to our website, and click on "Forms."

Each team packet should include:

- 1 Team Captain Guide (Captain only)
- 8 Team Member Guides
- 8 Cover/Sign-Up Letters
- 1 Team Registration Form (Captain only)
- 8 Individual Registration Forms

- 8 Individual Mileage Logs
- 1 Team Captain's Log (Captain only)
- 8 Wrap-Up Forms
- 8 Mileage Equivalent handouts

Description of Team Packet Items

The *Team Captain Guide* provides step-by-step instructions for Team Captains. Site Managers and/or county Extension agents use this to train Team Captains. Team Captains use this to help remember their duties, such as registering, entering mileage and pounds, and the wrap-up on our website.

The *Team Member Guide* provides information to help Walk Across Texas participants know how to be a successful team members. The Team Captain can add his/her contact information before printing, or team members can fill in the information when they receive the Team Member Guide.

The *Cover/Sign Up Letter* tells potential participants what Walk Across Texas is and provides dates for events. Go to our website, and click on "Forms." Add the information for your organization before printing. This form goes on top of each team packet.

The *Team Registration Form* is used by the Team Captain to sign-up team members with their contact information and to list the team name. The Captain gives the completed form to the Site Manager, who will forward it to the county Extension agent. Please note: Only the Team Captain completes this form. To find your agent and the agent's contact information, go to our website, and click on "Find Your Agent."

The *Individual Registration Form* is completed by the Captain and seven team members, including the signature box. Members turn these forms in to their Captain, who uses the forms to register themselves and each team member. Please note: Captains must register first. Go to our website, and click on "Register."

The *Individual Mileage Log* is used by everyone on the team, including the Captain, to write down their daily mileage. At the end of the week, the

mileage and/or pounds lost are noted before e-mailing, faxing, or calling the weekly totals to the Captain.

The *Team Captain's Log* is used by the Team Captain to record his or her own and each team member's weekly mileage and/or pounds lost. Team members e-mail, fax, or phone their weekly totals to their Captain. The Captain then enters the mileage from this form once each week on our website. Click on "Enter miles."

The *Wrap-Up Form* is completed by everyone, including the Captain, when Walk Across Texas is over. The forms are then given to the Captain to enter on our website. Information obtained from this form helps improve Walk Across Texas each year.

The *Mileage Equivalents* handout helps everyone have a number of ways to convert other aerobic activities, such as swimming, to mileage.

Step 5. Train Team Captains.

The county Extension agent and/or Site Manager trains Team Captains. Before the training starts, give each potential Team Captain a team packet.

Team Captains register the entire team and enter team mileage and pounds lost, keep members informed, answer members' questions, and make certificates for the Recognition Event.

Step 6. Recruit Team Members.

Team Captains find seven other people to walk for their team. The Captain signs up everyone on the Team Registration Form and sends the form to the Site Manager.

Step 7. Start Walk Across Texas with a Kick-Off Event.

The Kick-Off Event may be as simple or elaborate as your group wants. It is a great way to get more teams signed up and enthusiastic about starting to

become physically active. Suggested activities are listed on our website. Click on "Events" and then "Kick-Off."

Step 8. Provide a Midway or "Don't Give Up Now" Event.

This event is aimed at giving participants a "boost" to keep going. Like the Kick-Off Event, it may be as simple or elaborate as you wish. Your group may even choose not to do it. We've found that people tend to start giving up about the fourth week of Walk Across Texas, and this is a way to motivate them to keep walking. Suggested activities are listed on our website. Click on "Events" and then on "Midway."

Step 9. End with a Recognition or Celebration Event.

Teams reaching the opposite border first and/or walking the most miles are recognized. Prizes may be given, but this is not necessary. Some organizations have a speaker.

Everyone is given a certificate by their Team Captain that recognizes their participation in Walk Across Texas. Team Captains can go to our website, and click on "Certificates." Each team member's name can then be entered on the form and printed. Team Captains distribute the certificates at this event or give them to members who are unable to attend.

Task Force members and other volunteers may be recognized, too.

Step 10. Enter Walk Across Texas Success Stories.

Tell us about the success stories of participants on your team. Go to our website, and click on "Success Stories."

Frequently Asked Questions about Walk Across Texas

Q. How far ahead should we begin planning?

A. Most organizations begin planning about two to three months before their Walk Across Texas starting date.

Q. Why have competition?

A. Teams from your organization compete to determine which team walks (1) the approximate 830 miles from the East to the West Texas borders, or (2) the greatest number of miles.

Competition between teams helps members keep going when they feel like quitting. “Winning” is certainly a goal, but establishing the habit of regular daily walking is the real objective. To minimize the focus on “winning,” some groups recommend putting the name of every team that finishes the 830 miles into a “hat” and then drawing one to three winning teams for special recognition.

Q. How far does each person need to walk every week if a team is to make it the 830 miles across Texas?

A. Each person needs to average about 13 miles per week. Some people walk more and others less. Gradually work to increase your mileage to avoid injury.

Q. Do we all have to walk at the same time?

A. Team members do not need to walk together unless they want to do so. Treadmills are okay. Other aerobic activities may be converted to miles using the Mileage Equivalents handout that is found on our website.

Q. What if we want to change a few of the rules?

A. Changing or adding your own special touches are okay. Just do the same for everyone in your group, and let all know about the changes.

Q. How can we see our team’s progress?

A. Members pool their mileage each week to help their team move across either a paper road map or the on-line map on our website. If a paper map is used, generally, no more than the top 10 teams can be shown each week.

Q. How much does it cost?

A. Walk Across Texas is meant to be a “free” activity. Fundraising is not a part of Walk Across Texas; however, if someone participates in a fundraising activity, such as those put on by the American Heart Association, those miles may be counted for Walk Across Texas.

Q. Why do we need all of these forms and records?

A. Each form does have an important function. The Registration Form documents your baseline activity information and lets us know you have checked with your doctor. You write down miles every time you walk because doing this helps you be successful, as well as accurate. The Wrap-up Form helps us learn ways to improve for next time and whether or not the program helps. Please let us know your comments. Entering “Success Stories” helps us know specific ways the program helped you.

Call your county Extension agent if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.