

## **I Have Started Exercising at Least a Thousand Times!**

Most people know they should increase their activity level by walking or aerobics classes. In fact, many of you probably made a New Years' resolution this year to start on January 1 and have already given up. Is there any hope?

The answer is yes. Changing any habit requires several tries and a great deal of effort for most people. Increasing your activity level can have a great impact on your health both now and later in life.

A recent article in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* reported on a study where 100 middle-aged women were encouraged to walk for exercise while another 100 were not encouraged to walk. Ten years later, women in the walking group had significantly less health problems than the non-walking group of women. The women in the walking group were walking seven miles more each week than those in the other group. Only 2% of the walking group were diagnosed with heart disease, whereas almost 13% of the non-walkers had a diagnosis of heart disease. Walkers also had fewer hospitalizations, surgeries, and falls. Participating in the short-term walking program ten years earlier was the main difference between these two groups!

So, trying again is important. Studies have shown that walking with others and engaging in a program long enough to make walking a habit promote success. If you would like to get started now, call your county Extension agent, \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ and ask about Walk Across Texas. This is a free, fun, group physical activity program. All you need is a group of 8 friends, family members, or co-workers who want to keep track of the amount they walk for 8 weeks. You can encourage one another to keep going and see if your team can reach your destination first before other groups participating too. Walk Across Texas starts \_\_\_\_\_ and will end on \_\_\_\_\_.

This year we have added a weight loss program. If you want to lose weight, let us know. Classes will be held on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. If you want to receive instructions by mail, we can do that too.

Getting started is the hard part, but starting and keeping going is much easier with the support of others!