

MEDIA GUIDE

Navigating Media Relations



Produced by The University of Texas at Austin
Department of Kinesiology and Health Education
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Texas Diabetes Program/Council
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WALK TEXAS!

Media Guide

WALK TEXAS! is a community-based program with the mission to promote the health of Texans by increasing awareness and opportunities for individuals to engage in regular physical activity, especially walking. Walking is one of the safest and most natural forms of exercise and can help control a variety of chronic diseases, particularly diabetes, obesity, and coronary heart disease. Walk Texas! takes a multifaceted approach to facilitating walking and physical activity among Texans through the support of the following:

- ★ Community coalitions
- ★ Environment and policy change
- ★ Health provider assessment and counseling
- ★ Walking groups
- ★ Media and special events

Because most organizations follow a *Plan, Do, Check, Act* cycle to systematize program development, the Walk Texas! guides are organized around this cycle and are meant to compliment each other.

The Walk Texas! Media Guide has several communication tools to help you navigate media relations and enlist the support of local reporters to promote walking and physical fitness in your community. Even if you're already a whiz at public relations, we hope you'll find a useful idea or two to help you promote your Walk Texas! activities. Helpful resources included.

When informed and willing, your local media can provide a considerable boost in public enthusiasm and support for your Walk Texas! Program. The trick is to give them interesting, newsworthy information that they can use easily.

Other guides in this series include:

- ★ Planning Guide for Community Events
- ★ Quick Start Guide to a Physically Active Organization
- ★ Walking/Biking Guide: Advocating for Environmental Change
- ★ Evaluation Guide





Steps For Working With the Media

STEP 1

DETERMINE WHAT MEDIA CHANNELS ARE AVAILABLE

★ Television & Radio

- ★ Public affairs programs
- ★ News coverage
- ★ Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- ★ Talk shows
- ★ Live interviews

★ Print

- ★ Newspapers
- ★ Newsletters
- ★ Community bulletin boards
- ★ Billboards
- ★ Local magazines

★ Alternative

- ★ T-shirts
- ★ Payroll/city bill stuffers
- ★ Community organizations
- ★ Posters, banners, & table tents
- ★ Websites
- ★ Yard signs
- ★ Mall barricades
- ★ Bus signage
- ★ Billboards



STEP 2

SELECT YOUR MEDIA SOURCE

- ★ Who can provide free media exposure via PSAs instead of paid advertising space?
- ★ Who will use role model stories (behavioral journalism) along with your health information message? Behavioral journalism links journalists with clients to provide the public with a model for behavior change.
- ★ With whom do you already have a relationship?
- ★ With whom do your volunteers have a relationship?
- ★ What types of media outreach would be efficient and cost effective for accomplishing your goals?



STEP 3 **DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MEDIA CONTACTS**

- ★ Build a relationship with your media source by
 - ★ Establishing your credibility
 - ★ Following their work and finding out their special interests
 - ★ Networking to determine if you have shared interests or acquaintances
- ★ Be prepared to share information about your organization's activities, health information about current issues, and be sure to mention local celebrities who are involved in your efforts
- ★ Mention the media contact's personal experiences that may be associated with your message or event to help establish rapport
- ★ Be credible and honest; positive and easy to contact; responsive and accommodating; authoritative and in control; likeable and professional

STEP 4 **DISCUSS THE DETAILS OF YOUR COVERAGE**

- ★ Working with media personnel to co-produce the article or story is ideal
- ★ You can be responsible for
 - ★ Recruiting role models
 - ★ Providing credible, current and exciting information on your health topic
 - ★ Being an expert resource or providing access to one
- ★ Media personnel can be responsible for
 - ★ Setting a production schedule
 - ★ Scheduling airtime or column space

STEP 5 **DEVELOP YOUR MEDIA PACKET TO INCLUDE**

- ★ Current fact sheet with health statistics on physical activity
- ★ Contact person for interviews
- ★ News release: Answer the 5 W's: Who, What, When, Where, & Why it is important
- ★ One-page human interest story
- ★ Photographs or high-resolution digital images



STEP 6 PREPARING A NEWS RELEASE

- ★ Make it concise and write clearly in short words and sentences
- ★ Be sure to capture the main message in the first two sentences
- ★ A strong lead will answer: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and sometimes how and how much
- ★ Explain quickly and clearly why your news is important
- ★ Link your message to current news and be sure your story is pertinent
- ★ Use quotations to add interest
- ★ Be sure to proofread. Accuracy is paramount
- ★ Get it out on time and hand deliver if you must
- ★ Send it to the correct person
- ★ Include your name, phone number, and address in case the reporter needs more information

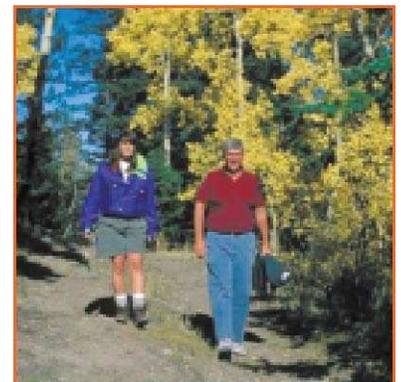
STEP 7 SEVERAL WAYS TO HELP A REPORTER ARE TO PROVIDE

- ★ A well-justified topic
- ★ Pertinent statistics and authoritative data
- ★ Contacts and access to knowledgeable experts
- ★ A local human interest story

★ **Tip For An Interview:** Remember there is no such thing as “off the record” when talking with reporters. Tell the truth. Just give the facts.

Additional tips

- Get your key messages in early
- Be brief and concise
- Answer first, explain second
- Speak in a manner that your audience will understand
- Do not attempt to speak for someone else





Sample Press Release

HEALTHY MILLIONAIRES

For Immediate Release

Date: _____ Contact Name: _____ Contact Phone Number: _____

Local Leaders Launch Plan to Create Healthy Texans

(Name of the company/organization) community leaders are looking for men, women, teens and children interested in becoming Healthy Texas Millionaires. Walk Texas! organizers are inviting everyone in (name of the community) to take some bold steps - one million in fact - to improve their health. How you ask? Just by becoming physically active and walking for 30 minutes most days of the week.

“Becoming a Walk Texas! Millionaire is a lot easier than most people think,” said (name/title). It takes about 3,500 steps and 30 minutes for the average adult to walk a mile and a half. Before you know it, the steps and positive benefits of walking really add up.”

(Insert information about your local physical activity program here)

Walking at a brisk pace - about as fast as you’d move through an airport if you were hurrying to catch a flight - meets guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for 30 minutes of moderate, regular exercise five days of the week. The recommendation was issued in response to alarming statistics from the U.S. Surgeon General that 60% of Americans lead a sedentary life style with only occasional exercise, and 25% of us don’t bother to exercise at all.

Texas has 5 of the 25 fattest cities in the United States as reported by *Men’s Fitness Magazine*. Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, El Paso, and Fort Worth are all suffering from obesity.

Health experts point out that walking has a long list of health benefits. Walking improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, controls weight, reduces stress and increases self- esteem. Most regular walkers also report a boost in energy and improved sleep.

Walking can also help head off some of the serious illnesses that afflict millions of Texans. By reducing blood pressure and strengthening blood vessels, heart, and lungs, walking can help prevent diabetes, coronary heart disease, colon cancer and obesity. It’s also a deterrent against osteoporosis and can be beneficial for people with arthritis.

“What’s great about walking is that it’s easy to do, doesn’t require any special equipment, and it’s something fun we can do by ourselves, with friends or with our families,” said (name).

Walk Texas! is sponsored by the DSHS Diabetes Program and Council. For information about joining a Walk Texas! Group in your community contact (name) with the (organization) at (phone number).





Walking Facts

- ★ The *Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health* recommends that every adult should engage in moderate-intensity physical activities for at least thirty minutes on five or more days of the week.
- ★ The 30 minutes a day of physical activity recommended by the Surgeon General doesn't have to be completed all at once. Thirty minutes of exercise can be spread throughout the day.
- ★ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that regular exercise can help you live longer, make you less likely to die from heart disease, reduce your risk of developing diabetes or high blood pressure, improve your psychological well-being and reduce your chances of developing colon cancer.
- ★ Men and women, regardless of age, can benefit from regular physical activity like walking.
- ★ Walking is one of the safest and most natural forms of physical activity.
- ★ Walking can help prevent the bone-thinning effects of osteoporosis and may also be beneficial for people with arthritis.
- ★ Walking helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscle, and joints.
- ★ Walking helps reduce blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure.
- ★ Walking enhances self-esteem and gives most individuals a greater sense of control.
- ★ Walking can improve your health in a variety of ways. With regular walking, you'll lose weight, lower your blood pressure and help improve circulation. Also, if you have diabetes, walking can help lower your blood sugar level.
- ★ Walking helps older adults become stronger and better able to move about.
- ★ Walking in proper shoes is important to prevent injury. Look for shoes with a slightly elevated firm heel and padded arch supports. They should be as wide as your feet and half-inch longer than your longest toe. The soles of your walking shoes should be flexible and slip resistant. Experts say you should replace your shoes after you've walked 500 or 600 miles in them.
- ★ A brisk walking pace - about how fast you'd be walking if you were hurrying to catch a plane at the airport - is about 120 steps per minute.
- ★ The average person will burn about 150 calories by walking two miles in 30 minutes.





Helpful Resources

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity (www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity) outlines strategies that communities can use to address the health problems associated with being overweight or obese. These include requiring physical education in all school grades, providing more healthy food options on school campuses, and providing safe and accessible recreational facilities for residents of all ages.

The 1996 landmark report, Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/sgr.htm) brings together the results of decades of research on physical activity and health.

The CDC Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity website (www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa) offers information, publications and links about a variety of health issues that relate to nutrition and physical activity.

Shapeup America! (www.shapeup.org) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals achieve a healthy weight throughout their lives.

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