



A guide for team co-ordinators on the **Steps to Health** Challenge 2021



Thanks to the co-ordinators

Thanks for taking the time to be a team co-ordinator for the annual staff *Steps to Health* challenge. We acknowledge that you have a busy working life already, but we are delighted that you find it worthwhile to organise and motivate your colleagues. It will be harder this year as you may not be working in the same place but try using on-line tools to make groups and get in touch virtually.

Research tells us that those who walk as part of a team are more inspired and more motivated to do so than those who walk alone. Counting the steps while you and your team do the Steps to Health challenge will also help to keep up the momentum.

It's not just about the 10,000 steps a day, but also about improving everyone's count.

Follow local COVID-19 guidelines at all times. It can still be fun and you can chat to your team while walking or share some photos on your What's App group or Twitter.

How will Steps to Health challenge benefit our team?

The Steps to Health challenge will:

- give us an increased awareness of our physical activity levels
- motivate us to become more active
- improve staff morale
- improve our health

Research tells us that the most common reasons employees sign up to a *Steps to Health* challenge are:

- fun
- fitness
- to lose weight
- most importantly – because it's organised by the workplace

Spread the word – tell colleagues how good walking makes you feel.

What do I need to do as a team co-ordinator?

- form a team with willing colleagues of between two and 10 members
- give your team a name
- register your team online at www.hse.ie/stepschallenge

The national project team will then send you:

- star walker badges to send to most improved weekly team member
- token prize to allow you to organise a small competition between your team members

Participants need to fill in a questionnaire

Ask each of your team members to complete the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q). Participants can download it from www.hse.ie/stepschallenge/ This will allow participants to assess themselves if they need to have a chat with their GP before starting the Challenge. They don't have to share the questionnaire with anyone.

Set up an email group for your team

The national project team will send you weekly emails and information on competitions for prizes so please pass these on to your team. Encourage your team to take part in the competitions.

Encourage your team members to fill in their daily step count on the "Daily Tracker" chart (available to print or download on www.hse.ie/stepschallenge/)

Ask them to provide you with their week 1 and week 5 totals so that you can see the team progress made over the five weeks. They don't have to put their names on them – it can be recorded anonymously. We will ask you as team co-ordinator to return these counts to the project team so that we so that we can see how much progress has been made nationally.

Encourage staff to use their own step counters

Some of your team members may have their own step counters, smart phone apps or wearable devices, like a FitBit, to record their daily step count. Encourage your team

to always wear their step counters – before, during and after work. Remind them if they change their clothes during the day to transfer their step counter!

Survey and competition

We will also ask you to fill out a survey at the end of the annual Steps to Health challenge so that we can improve the next one and record the progress made by staff. There will be a competition for all team co-ordinators who complete this survey.

How will I promote and motivate my colleagues taking part in the annual Steps to Health challenge?

Email and social media

We will send you email updates with information on the challenge, including competitions. We will ask you to post stories and pictures on our social media and to include them in your local and national newsletters, emails and websites.

Competitions and challenges

Some teams may wish to compete with other teams in your workplace.

You could also set your own team challenges such as walking the same number of steps it would take to climb a mountain or reach another city in Ireland or Europe. If you are not meeting or working together, you can do online this via your email or What's App groups.

Educate your team about health benefits

Emphasise the health benefits. Tell your team that aerobic activity, like a brisk walk, must be included to build up to the 10,000 steps to get health benefits. Let your team know that by being active at moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes, five days a week, you decrease your risk of heart disease, stroke, some cancers and living with obesity.

If your team members can't do the 30 minutes in one single session, the minutes can be broken down into 3 sessions of 10 minutes throughout the day.

More information is available on our website: www.hse.ie/stepschallenge or email: stepstohealth@hse.ie
[@hsesteps](https://twitter.com/hsesteps) | [#HSEstepschallenge](https://twitter.com/HSEstepschallenge)

Any extra steps you take every day will be good for your health.