Almost 7,000 take part
STEPS TO HEALTH CHALLENGERS GET CREATIVE!

HE Steps to Health Team would like to say a big thank you to all of the 467 teams and 8,834 participants who took part in this year’s Steps to Health Challenge. Teams from all over the country were feeling the benefits of moving more and aiming for 10,000 steps each and every day.

We walked the highways and the byways, the coasts and the beaches, the hills and the valleys, the streets and the parks of Ireland. Some people even continued their step counts on foreign shores, bringing their little green step counter on holidays with them.

The Steps to Health National Project Team would like to congratulate each and every one of you who participated in the Challenge this year and we would encourage you to keep on going now that you have formed a good habit no matter what the weather! Keep challenging yourself to increase your physical activity levels by setting a higher step count each day/week.

We loved following the teams’ journeys on social media and were delighted to see so many pictures, inspiring ideas and even a few rhymes!

Our youngest poet, Brógha, is 13 years old, and her mum Orlaíse Dorgan is a member of the Quadrix R Us team at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda. We hope lots of Steps to Health challengers will take a leaf out of Brógha’s book and never stop!

With 467 teams taking part this year, none of it would be possible without our team coordinators. We did a call out for the most inspiring team co-ordinator of 2018’s challenge, and our deserving winner was Rachel Shafton from Team HeartSmart in University Hospital, Limerick. Here is Rachel with her prize, a Darwin-Furner 35 fitness watch.

Giving us all a run for our money is 62-year-old Peggy Lundy. Peggy wasn’t going to be left out and took it upon herself to be the leader board, and thanks to some inspiring pep talks and a dedicated team, she got them on the move so much that her step count is now in the top three, said Peggy.

“I was my greatest delight to see some of our less enthusiastic members step up to the mark. They were so happy with their achievements. As we work in theatre we are unable to leave at lunchtime to join in some of the hospital organised walks, so staff made extra effort after work. Some pushed buggies counting their steps, others pushed golf carts and team up to the number of steps.

“We even had a lady with high numbers after climbing Droughn Patrick, while others danced up to their numbers.

“It was a wonderful experience for me to be a leader. I feel fortunate to be well enough to work and to be a part of such a great group of people.

“Finally, I conclude by telling you I am a volunteer in the hospital and that I did parkrun on Saturday morning with great support and encouragement from Alí, one of the coordinators, and completed the 5k in 22 minutes 17 seconds. You’re never too old!”

“We were so delighted to see that participants not only increased their activity levels but many increased their intake of vegetables salad and fruit during the challenge as part of the Health Lunches weekly challenge.

ROISIN’S BLOG HELPS HERSELF AND TEAM TO STEP UP TO CHALLENGE

If you didn’t take part this year, remember it’s never too late to join in. Every single step makes a difference, reducing your risk of heart disease by 50%, lowering your risk of stroke and some cancers, particularly colon and breast cancer. Thanks to all 8,834 of you for taking part in the challenge this year, we hope to see even more of you in 2019!

The recent Steps to Health Challenge may have come to an end but staff across the HSE are still walking their way to a healthier lifestyle.

While the challenge has finished, staff are using it as a springboard to further progress. For one participant, the best way of keeping herself and those around her motivated was writing about their progress.

Róisín O’Hara, Screening Promotion Assistant in the National Screening Service 50 and above Women in Action champion, started a weekly blog ‘Róisín’s Ramblings’ to let everyone know how the NSS Central Office were getting on.

“The Steps to Health challenge team had decided to include Ramblings in the weekly newsletter and this was the result. It was not a surprise, I have been a member of the staff for many years and I have been to the clinic on many occasions, I know how good it is for your mental health. I have also been a member of the team for many years and I do not have any interest in any other team but I was happy with the results.

Róisín had targeted over 10,000 steps daily and instead of planning to feel sick to the ground, she was having a wonderful time.

“I am a PCP and I have been to the clinic on many occasions, I know how good it is for your mental health. I have also been a member of the team for many years and I do not have any interest in any other team but I was happy with the results.

I also got to know some of the amazing people I work with and get an appetite for walking and the feel-good goes on, she said. She has also encouraged a number of colleagues since the Steps to Health challenge, including walking her first parkrun and going out with a walking group.

“I feel very proud and feel so connected with my team. The tactics for the challenge were really comprehensive and the weekly newsletter and competitions were great fun,” Róisín said.

Róisín led from the front in her group, and despite challenges, four of them exceeded half a million steps each. That averages out at over 14,000 steps per day.

“A couple of days out due to injuries and a few didn’t quite reach the 10k a day but they did more than they usually would. We had a great mix of colleagues and great chats – it’s amazing what you don’t know about people who sit a few desks away from you!”

And there’s no going back for Róisín.

“There’s no way I’m giving up my 10,000 steps a day – they’re part of my daily life now.”

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My mummy walks every day. Hardly ever any time to play. When I get bored, I walk. Walking is good for me. Sometimes her Jammers stay under my skirt.

Waking up in the morning and tired. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. Walking everyday makes me feel better. “Walking everyday makes me feel better.”

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