



# WALK!

## Healthy South Dakota Community WALKABILITY TOOLKIT

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IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH, WELL-BEING & QUALITY OF LIFE

**HEALTHYSD.GOV**

*Live better. Grow stronger.*





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# Welcome

## FROM HEALTHYSD.GOV



**Why Walk?** Being physically active is one of the best things South Dakotans can do to improve their health. In addition to eating a healthy diet, regular physical activity greatly enhances overall health, well-being, and longevity. Walking is an excellent form of physical activity for most South Dakotans, and is a form of exercise that can be done virtually anywhere. Walking is considered an 'entry-level' form of exercise, meaning that most people who engage in a regular program of walking are likely to try additional forms of physical activity.

Exciting initiatives are currently underway to make South Dakota communities more walkable and make walking and wheelchair rolling the easy choice for getting around town. Communities have many opportunities to help their residents of all abilities be more physically active, by improving access to walkable areas through improved trails and shared-use path systems, creating policies that support active lifestyles among different sectors, and community planning efforts that support improvements to 'built environments' or man-made surroundings conducive to physical activity (i.e. location of schools within neighborhoods to encourage children to walk to school).

## WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

The HealthySD program in the South Dakota Department of Health is excited to share this community walking toolkit to help you and your community, neighbors, friends, families, clubs, organizations, schools, worksites, and faith-based groups get started or maintain a regular program of physical activity, specifically walking.

***“Research has shown that social support can be an important influence on an individual's overall health and well-being. It arises from social networks and relationships in social settings outside the family that provide help in coping, managing stress, and changing behaviors such as increasing physical activity. These social networks, which may be newly created or preexisting, foster group cohesiveness and interpersonal bonding between members.”***

(Source: Social Support for Physical Activity-Establishing a Community-Based Walking Group Program to Increase Physical Activity among Youth and Adults-An Action Guide, Partnership for Prevention, CDC, April 2008)

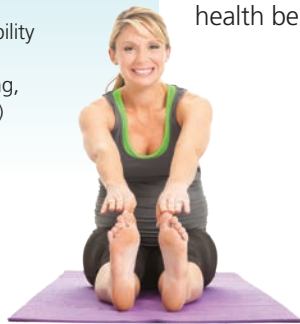
This tool kit is designed to improve the health of a community through walking, and can provide the catalyst for community leaders and residents to assess the walkability of a neighborhood and advocate for action to improve and increase walkable areas. **Intended audiences for this tool kit include local community leaders, volunteers, city planners, civic and service group officers, religious leaders, youth group leaders, community health advocates, policy makers, healthcare providers, worksite wellness coordinators, school leaders, and others with an interest in improving health in a community.** A person described above might identify *several individuals* in a community who could serve as team leaders for several different walking groups within a single community. Or, a single individual might choose to serve as a team leader for a single walking group, for example, a new mothers walking club, a neighborhood walking club, a senior citizens walking club, etc. So, lace up your sneakers, grab your bottle of water, and...walk!

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES AND BENEFITS

Physical activity has many health benefits, and the list of benefits is growing. Regular physical activity lowers risk of early death, coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, colon and breast cancers, and can aid in weight loss when combined with a healthy diet. Physical activity also improves mental capacity and

### 2008 CDC Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

- Adults should accumulate 150 minutes per week
- Spread out your physical activity through the week, working at least 10 minutes per session
- Exercise at moderate to vigorous intensity
- Include muscle strengthening 2x per week
- Include flexibility training (i.e. stretching, yoga, Pilates)



learning, improves self-esteem, decreases stress and anxiety, enhances flexibility and endurance, and improves overall mood, well-being, and quality of life. Weight-bearing physical activity like walking also helps prevent osteoporosis.

Current federal guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend adults accumulate at least **150 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity** physical activity per week. This can translate to 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week; or 10 minute intervals, 3 times per day, 5 days per week. When you are physically active at a **moderate-intensity**, you are working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat. You can talk, but not sing. When you are physically active at a **vigorous-intensity**, you are breathing hard, and can barely talk. By working at these intensities, you are working your heart at a level to reap health benefits.

#### MODERATE INTENSITY

*"I can talk when I do this, but I cannot sing."*

#### VIGOROUS INTENSITY

*"I am breathing hard and can barely talk when I do this."*

The guidelines also recommend **muscle-strengthening activities** to increase bone strength and muscular fitness. Adults should strive for muscle strengthening and resistance activities at least 2 times per week, working all the major muscle groups. You can use hand-held or free weights, resistance bands, gym resistance training equipment systems such as Nautilus™ or Universal™, household items like soup cans or water bottles, or your own body weight for resistance.

Strive for 8-12 repetitions of each muscle strengthening activity, 2 times per week, to reap the most health benefits. Increase the number of sets of repetitions as you get stronger, increasing the weight. For example, perform 1-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions (bicep curls, i.e.) of each muscle strengthening activity, 2 times per week. Seek out qualified fitness professionals in your community for guidance and examples of muscle strengthening activities, or find helpful videos at [www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/videos/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/videos/index.htm).

### WALKING ESSENTIALS:

- Equipment
- Hydration
- Personal Safety
- Walking Etiquette
- Beginner
- Group

## WALKING ESSENTIALS

Walking is an easy choice for getting your physical activity. Walking is free, environmentally friendly, and is good for your health! In addition to starting a walking program, strive to make walking integral to your daily life, and challenge yourself to increase your opportunities to walk daily. Park farther away from your destinations, take the stairs instead of the elevator, and 'walk your errands' instead of driving to them. Active transportation, the integration of physical activity into daily routines such as walking or biking to destinations such as work, grocery stores, or parks, is a great way to get your daily physical activity.

With proper equipment, adequate hydration, and personal safety, walking is a smart choice for physical activity. Here are some walking essentials to help you get started:

**Equipment:** All you need for walking is a good pair of athletic or tennis shoes with proper stability and cushioning. Make sure you have about 1/2 inch of space between your longest toe and the end of the shoe, and choose socks made from synthetic fibers instead of cotton.



**Hydration:** Plan to hydrate before, during, and after walking, especially if you are walking in warmer climates or conditions to avoid overheating and dehydration. A good rule of thumb is to drink **1/2 cup of water for every 15 minutes** of physical activity. Choose plain water, and avoid the sugar-sweetened sports drinks and flavored waters. You'll save calories and money. Whenever possible, carry your own personal environmentally-friendly water bottle (stainless steel, i.e.) and avoid the plastic. You'll be helping the environment at the same time.

**Personal Safety:** When walking outdoors, be sun smart and always wear high SPF sunscreen. Dress in layers to adjust to varying temperatures. Be aware of your surroundings at all times, and walk in familiar, well-lit areas. It is wise to avoid listening to music when walking so that you are aware of traffic noises, other pedestrians, or pets.

**Walking Etiquette:** Follow pedestrian traffic guidelines by using crosswalks, sidewalks when available, or if no sidewalks or paths are accessible, always face traffic when walking on the shoulder of the road or street. In winter weather, be extra cautious if walking in snow or icy conditions, always keeping your eyes on the oncoming traffic ahead.

When walking indoors on a track, be sure to follow the posted track direction for that day and heed the instructions on which lane is for walkers, and which lane is for runners. Typically the outer lanes are considered the passing lanes and are used by those running or walking at a faster pace. If you plan to change lanes abruptly, be sure to look behind you first. Many health clubs use timing devices with special colored 'pacing' lights mounted on the walls surrounding the track where you can monitor your pace and challenge yourself. Be sure to ask staff to give you instructions on how they work.

#### MAKE WALKING INTEGRAL TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

- 'Walk your errands' instead of driving to them
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Park farther away from the mall, post office, or grocery store
- Take family walks after dinner instead of watching TV
- Walk down to the neighbor's house instead of calling them
- Instead of a coffee break, take a walk break

**Beginner:** If you are new to exercise or haven't been physically active in a while, there are some guidelines you should follow for beginning a walking program.

- Start slowly, gradually adding minutes as you feel more comfortable.
- A few minutes is better than none. Set small goals for yourself initially so that you feel successful when achieving them. Walk to the mailbox and add one lap around the block, adding more as you progress.
- Consider using a pedometer to track your daily steps and use that as a motivator to add more each day. Some organizations have free pedometers. Track your walking program by using a Walking Log or Journal to motivate you. ([See Sample Walking Log](#)) You can also track your walking by using a variety of fitness apps to motivate you. ([See Resources](#))
- Use *proper walking technique*. This includes maintaining an upright posture, holding your stomach in (tightening your abdominal muscles), striking with the heel and rolling off from the toe, and keeping the arms bent generally at an angle between **45-90°**. Keep your fists 'loose', not clenched. Your head should be in a neutral position with your gaze towards the road ahead of you. Keep your shoulders relaxed and not 'hunched' up by your ears.

## EXAMPLES OF NON-FOOD REWARDS

- New athletic shoes
  - Trip to the movies (pack a healthy snack)
  - Try a new fitness class
  - Walking magazine subscription
  - Eco-friendly water bottle
  - Plan a special weekend outing
  - Purchase a Yoga DVD
  - Spend an afternoon at the library reading
- For extra motivation, consider joining a walking club or start one up yourself. Becoming a team leader for a walking club can help you meet your goals and get others 'walking' the same path towards a healthier lifestyle.
- It is important to stretch while your body is warm to avoid injury, so plan to stop and stretch after a few minutes of walking, then continue your walk. See more about avoiding injury and examples of stretching exercises later in this tool kit. A good walking program looks like this: warm-up, stretch, walk briskly, cool-down, and stretch again!
  - Always keep your daily physical activity fun and something you look forward to. Examples of how to keep walking fun are changing your route, walking with a friend, walking at the mall or local recreation center, taking a historical walk through your community, or getting off the sidewalk and heading to a local nature trail.
  - Consider giving yourself personal non-food rewards as you meet specific goals to keep you motivated. Determine at which milestones you will award yourself and make a list to keep you looking ahead to what 'treat' you get next!

**Group:** Many people choose to exercise with a buddy or a group for the support, camaraderie, and just for the fun of it. Many people find having an exercise buddy helps them stay on task and maintain their workout schedule.

Research supports the many health and social benefits of walking with others. Check out AARP's Walking Toolkit for tips on starting a walking group. ([See Resources](#))



## CREATING A WALKABLE COMMUNITY

Why are walkable communities beneficial? Communities with high rates of walkability, bikeability, and use of public transit have lower rates of chronic disease. Safe, walkable neighborhoods can promote regular and routine physical activity for all individuals in a community regardless of fitness level. Enhancing walkability and encouraging active transportation creates vibrant neighborhoods, increases community engagement, civic connectedness, enhances economic vitality and air quality, and decreases the burden on healthcare systems.

**Assessing Community Walkability:** A great starting point for communities is to assess and discuss community or neighborhood walkability. The Healthy South Dakota Active Transportation Checklist can get your community started. This might be an effective way to get your community to discuss what improvements could be made to enhance

walking areas for all residents, what barriers exist within a community that prevent residents from walking in certain areas, and how to move forward in creating more walkable areas. Walkability as defined by The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, Inc. is ***"The measure of the overall walking and living conditions in an area, defined as 'the extent to which the built environment is friendly to the presence of people walking, living, shopping, visiting, enjoying or spending time in an area.'"*** The Healthy SD Active Transportation Checklist can get your community started on addressing walkability. ([See Resources](#))



## GET MOVIN'!

All sectors of your community can benefit from creating a more walkable, vibrant community. By encouraging walking and thus more physical activity through multi-sectoral collaboration, communities can make great strides in the health and overall well-being of its residents. Here are examples of how various sectors in your community can encourage more walking:

- **Community:** Conduct a walk audit. Take a walk in your community with this checklist and see if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk. Look for possible ways to improve walkability. [www.saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/walkabilitychecklist.pdf](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/walkabilitychecklist.pdf)
- **Worksite:** Enhance walking at work through walk breaks, walking meetings, walking challenges, and promotion of nearby paths or trails. Also encourage employees to walk or bike to and from work. [www.pedbikeinfo.org/community/getstarted.cfm](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/community/getstarted.cfm)
- **Schools:** Organize a walking school bus program whereby a group of children walks to school with one or more adults. [apps.saferoutesinfo.org/training/walking\\_school\\_bus/](http://apps.saferoutesinfo.org/training/walking_school_bus/)
- **Healthcare:** Promote 'Exercise is Medicine' by prescribing exercise to patients, using exercise prescription pads. [www.healthysd.gov/exercise-is-medicine-2](http://www.healthysd.gov/exercise-is-medicine-2)
- **Parents & Caregivers:** Walk with your kids to nearby parks or attractions instead of driving, and replace screentime with fun walking adventures. [www.letsmove.gov/make-physical-activity-part-your-familys-routine](http://www.letsmove.gov/make-physical-activity-part-your-familys-routine)

“IN MANY PLACES AND IN MANY WAYS, OUR SOCIETY HAS MADE IT HARD TO WALK. MANY BARRIERS DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM WALKING, INCLUDING THOSE AFFECTING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL; PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND PERCEPTUAL BARRIERS; AND ORGANIZATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS. AN AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE BARRIERS THAT INFLUENCE PEOPLE'S DECISION OR ABILITY TO WALK ARE THE FIRST STEPS FOR INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES TO MAKE THE CHANGES THAT WILL EFFECTIVELY REDUCE OR ELIMINATE SUCH BARRIERS.”

Source: Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center;  
[www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org)

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOME ADULTS

Walking is a an activity that most everyone can do, which makes it such a good choice for physical activity, and one that can be done at all stages of life. The 2008 CDC Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans ([www.health.gov/paguidelines](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines)) provides additional considerations and recommendations for some adults. These are summarized below.

**People with Disabilities:** Adults with disabilities should strive to achieve the same physical activity guidelines as indicated earlier for the general population if they are able. This includes the recommendations for muscle-strengthening exercises. In consultation with their healthcare providers, people with disabilities should understand how their disabilities affect their ability to do physical activity. Some people with disabilities are not able to follow the CDC's guidelines for adults. These people should adapt their physical activity program to match their abilities. Studies show that physical activity can be done safely when the program is matched to an individual's abilities.

**Older Adults:** Regular physical activity is essential for healthy aging. Adults 65 years and older gain substantial health benefits from regular physical activity, and these benefits continue to occur throughout their lives. Promoting physical activity for older adults is especially important because this population is the least physically active of any age group.

**“THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THE HEALTHY BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FAR OUTWEIGH THE RISKS OF ADVERSE EVENTS FOR ALMOST ANYONE.”**

**CDC, 2008**

CDC states that for adults 65 and older who are fit and have no limiting chronic conditions, the physical activity recommendations are the same as for those of active adults. However, additional guidelines for older adults discuss the addition of balance training to prevent risk of falls. Older adults should do exercises that maintain or improve balance if they are at risk for falling. As with other groups with additional considerations for physical activity, older adults should avoid inactivity and should assess their level of effort for physical activity relative to their level of fitness.

**Pregnant and Postpartum Women:** Physical activity during pregnancy benefits a woman’s overall health. Healthy women who are pregnant or postpartum can and should follow the same physical activity guidelines for adults. Women who are pregnant should be under the care of a

healthcare provider with whom they can discuss how to adjust amounts of physical activity during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Unless a woman has medical reasons to avoid physical activity during pregnancy, she can begin or continue moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity during her pregnancy and after the baby is born.

During pregnancy, women should avoid doing exercises involving lying on their back after the first trimester. They should avoid doing activities that increase the risk of falling or abdominal trauma, including contact or collision sports, such as horseback riding, downhill skiing, soccer, and basketball.

**People with Chronic Health Conditions:** For more information about this specific topic, please refer to the 2008 CDC Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

## **AVOIDING INJURY...STRETCH!**

**Avoiding Injuries:** Although walking has a lower incidence of injury than other forms of physical activity, there is always a potential for injury. It is very important to add stretching and flexibility training to any fitness routine or program. Improper form, overuse, undesirable walking paths, and not taking time to properly stretch muscles are all potential reasons for injury. Here is an excerpt from ACTIVE LIVING Every Day, 20 Weeks to Lifelong Vitality, 2001, with regards to avoiding injury when being physically active:

***“Nothing can sidetrack your efforts to be physically active faster than an injury. One leading cause of activity-related injuries is trying to do too much too fast. The best bet is to take a gradual approach. This helps strengthen muscles and stretch tendons slowly, reducing the chances of an injury. Knee injuries are one of the most common injuries. You can lower the odds of hurting yourself by strengthening the muscles above the knee, called the quadriceps, and by stretching and strengthening the muscles in the back of your upper leg, which are sometimes called hamstring muscles.”***

As mentioned earlier, a good walking program includes a warm-up walk, a stretching period, a brisk walk, a cool-down period where you start to slowly reduce your pace, then followed by a thorough stretching segment.

**Stretching:** Stretching is very important to avoid injury when being physically active, and to increase flexibility which is a component of overall fitness. It is best to stretch when your muscles are warm, so after a few warm-up minutes of walking. Some experts feel it is ok to stretch cold muscles if done properly and with proper technique. Some of the most common stretches to include in a walking program are:

- Achilles tendon and calf stretch (heel cord and back of lower leg)
- Seated or standing hamstring stretch (back of thigh)
- Quadriceps stretch (front of thigh)
- Lower back stretch
- Pectoral stretch (chest)

Please see the [resource section](#) for a link to a helpful stretching handout.

**Flexibility Training:** There are other forms of flexibility training including yoga, Pilates, and stretch band training, to name a few. When done safely and with proper technique, adding these types of flexibility exercises to a walking program can enhance overall fitness and can help avoid injury.

A well-rounded fitness program includes a cardio component where you are raising your heart rate, such as when walking; a strengthening component where you are using resistance to increase muscle mass, such as lifting weights; and a flexibility component where you are practicing a series of stretches to increase overall flexibility.

## WALKING FORWARD

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We hope you have found the information in this tool kit helpful and encouraging. Being physically active is one of the best ways to improve your health, and walking is one of the easiest forms of physical activity. By implementing strategies to create more walkable communities, physical activity becomes easier for residents, which creates a healthier community! Please contact us at [HealthySD.gov](http://HealthySD.gov) for more information and keep walking!

### Cardiovascular Conditioning

- Exercises to raise the heart rate and breathing rate

### Strengthening Component

- Exercises to repetitively work major muscle groups using resistance and to increase bone strength

### Flexibility Training

- Exercises to increase range of motion in joints and muscles



“WALKABILITY ADDS STRENGTH AND JOY TO THE VERY FABRIC OF COMMUNITY LIFE. OUT WALKING, WE MEET NEIGHBORS, GET EXERCISE, VISIT LOCAL SHOPS, ENJOY NEARBY PUBLIC SPACES AND DISCOVER REASONS TO WANT MORE OF EACH.”

**Walkable Edmonton Tool Kit**

## RESOURCES

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- [GoodandHealthySD.org](http://GoodandHealthySD.org)
- [HealthySD.gov](http://HealthySD.gov)
- HealthySD Active Transportation Checklist [healthysd.gov/active-transportation-checklist](http://healthysd.gov/active-transportation-checklist)
- SDSU iGrow Stretching Handout [igrow.org/up/resources/04-1001-2014.pdf](http://igrow.org/up/resources/04-1001-2014.pdf)
- [ActiveLivingResearch.org](http://ActiveLivingResearch.org)
- [AmericaWalks.org](http://AmericaWalks.org)
- [Completestreets.org](http://Completestreets.org)
- Everybodywalk! [www.everybodywalk.org/app/html](http://www.everybodywalk.org/app/html)
- #howiwalk: The campaign to rebrand the word walking [www.nchpad.org/howiwalk](http://www.nchpad.org/howiwalk)
- Map My Walk! [www.mapmywalk.com](http://www.mapmywalk.com)
- Safe Routes [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)
- Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov)
- Walking Paths, American Heart Association [www.startwalkingnow.org/walkingpathsapp.jsp](http://www.startwalkingnow.org/walkingpathsapp.jsp)
- Walk On: Strategies to Promote Walkable Communities – A Prevention Institute Brief [preventioninstitute.org](http://preventioninstitute.org)

## REFERENCES

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- AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) [www.Serve.gov/toolkits/walk-seniors/index.asp](http://www.Serve.gov/toolkits/walk-seniors/index.asp), [createthegood.org/sites/default/files/WalkingGroup.pdf](http://createthegood.org/sites/default/files/WalkingGroup.pdf)
- Active Living Every Day, 20 Weeks to Lifelong Vitality, 2001, Steven N. Blair... [et al.] [www.activeliving.info/index.cfm](http://www.activeliving.info/index.cfm)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans – Be Active, Healthy, and Happy! [www.health.gov/paguidelines](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines)
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center [www.Pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.Pedbikeinfo.org)
- Social Support for Physical Activity – Establishing a Community-Based Walking Group Program to Increase Physical Activity among Youth and Adults – An Action Guide, Partnership for Prevention, CDC, April 2008 [www.prevent.org/The-Community-Health-Promotion-Handbook/Social-Support-for-Physical-Activity.aspx](http://www.prevent.org/The-Community-Health-Promotion-Handbook/Social-Support-for-Physical-Activity.aspx)
- Walkability Checklist [www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/education-walkability-checklist](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/education-walkability-checklist)
- Walkable Edmonton Tool Kit [www.americantrails.org/resources/devel/walkability10steps.html](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/devel/walkability10steps.html)
- The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute [www.Walklive.org](http://www.Walklive.org)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

## SAMPLE WALKABILITY CHECKLIST

There are many quality walkability checklists available to suit every community's need: The Walkability Checklist is promoted by several national organizations. Samples from the checklist are below. You can download the full checklist here: [www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/education-walkability-checklist](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/education-walkability-checklist)

Take a walk and use this checklist to rate your neighborhood's walkability.

# How walkable is your community?

### Location of walk

### Rating Scale:

1

awful

6

2

3

4

5

6

awful
many problems
some problems
good
very good
excellent

#### 1. Did you have room to walk?

☐ Yes
 ☐ Some problems:
 

- ☐ Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
- ☐ Sidewalks were broken or cracked
- ☐ Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.
- ☐ No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
- ☐ Too much traffic
- ☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating:** (circle one)      Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

1 2 3 4 5 6

#### 2. Was it easy to cross streets?

☐ Yes
 ☐ Some problems:
 

- ☐ Road was too wide
- ☐ Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
- ☐ Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
- ☐ Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
- ☐ Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
- ☐ Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
- ☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating:** (circle one)      Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

1 2 3 4 5 6

#### 3. Did drivers behave well?

☐ Yes
 ☐ Some problems: Drivers ...
 

- ☐ Backed out of driveways without looking
- ☐ Did not yield to people crossing the street
- ☐ Turned into people crossing the street
- ☐ Drove too fast
- ☐ Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights?
- ☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating:** (circle one)      Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

1 2 3 4 5 6

#### 4. Was it easy to follow safety rules? Could you and your child...

☐ Yes    ☐ No
 

- Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?
- Stop and look left, right and then left again before crossing streets?
- Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?
- Cross with the light?

**Rating:** (circle one)      Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

1 2 3 4 5 6

#### 5. Was your walk pleasant?

☐ Yes
 ☐ Some problems:
 

- ☐ Needed more grass, flowers, or trees
- ☐ Scary dogs
- ☐ Scary people
- ☐ Not well lighted
- ☐ Dirty, lots of litter or trash
- ☐ Dirty air due to automobile exhaust
- ☐ Something else \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating:** (circle one)      Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

1 2 3 4 5 6

#### How does your neighborhood stack up? Add up your ratings and decide.

|              |              |   |
|--------------|--------------|---|
| 1. _____     | <b>26-30</b> | Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking. |
| 2. _____     | <b>21-25</b> | Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good. |
| 3. _____     | <b>16-20</b> | Okay, but it needs work.                              |
| 4. _____     | <b>11-15</b> | It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.  |
| 5. _____     | <b>5-10</b>  | It's a disaster for walking!                          |
| Total: _____ |              |   |

Now that you've identified the problems,  
go to the next page to find out how to fix them.



## Now that you know the problems, you can find the answers.

# Improving your community's score

### 1. Did you have room to walk?

Sidewalks or paths started and stopped  
Sidewalks broken or cracked  
Sidewalks blocked  
No sidewalks, paths or shoulders  
Too much traffic

#### What you and your child can do immediately

- pick another route for now
- tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist

#### What you and your community can do with more time

- speak up at board meetings
- write or petition city for walkways and gather neighborhood signatures
- make media aware of problem
- work with a local transportation engineer to develop a plan for a safe walking route

### 2. Was it easy to cross streets?

Road too wide  
Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross  
Crosswalks/traffic signals needed  
View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, or plants  
Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair

- pick another route for now
- share problems and checklist with local traffic engineering or public works department
- trim your trees or bushes that block the street and ask your neighbors to do the same
- leave nice notes on problem cars asking owners not to park there

- push for crosswalks/signals/ parking changes/curb ramps at city meetings
- report to traffic engineer where parked cars are safety hazards
- report illegally parked cars to the police
- request that the public works department trim trees or plants
- make media aware of problem

### 3. Did drivers behave well?

Backed without looking  
Did not yield  
Turned into walkers  
Drove too fast  
Sped up to make traffic lights or drove through red lights

- pick another route for now
- set an example: slow down and be considerate of others
- encourage your neighbors to do the same
- report unsafe driving to the police

- petition for more enforcement
- request protected turns
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- ask schools about getting crossing guards at key locations
- organize a neighborhood speed watch program

### 4. Could you follow safety rules?

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen  
Stop and look left, right, left before crossing  
Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic  
Cross with the light

- educate yourself and your child about safe walking
- organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school

- encourage schools to teach walking safely
- help schools start safe walking programs
- encourage corporate support for flex schedules so parents can walk children to school

### 5. Was your walk pleasant?

Needs grass, flowers, trees  
Scary dogs  
Scary people  
Not well lit  
Dirty, litter  
Lots of traffic

- point out areas to avoid to your child; agree on safe routes
- ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- report scary people to the police
- report lighting needs to the police or appropriate public works department
- take a walk with a trash bag
- plant trees, flowers in your yard
- select alternative route with less traffic

- request increased police enforcement
- start a crime watch program in your neighborhood
- organize a community clean-up day
- sponsor a neighborhood beautification or tree-planting day
- begin an adopt-a-street program
- initiate support to provide routes with less traffic to schools in your community (reduced traffic during am and pm school commute times)

### A Quick Health Check

Could not go as far or as fast as we wanted  
Were tired, short of breath or had sore feet or muscles  
Was the sun really hot?  
Was it hot and hazy?

- start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days
- invite a friend or child along
- walk along shaded routes where possible
- use sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher, wear a hat and sunglasses
- try not to walk during the hottest time of day

- get media to do a story about the health benefits of walking
- call parks and recreation department about community walks
- encourage corporate support for employee walking programs
- plant shade trees along routes
- have a sun safety seminar for kids
- have kids learn about unhealthy ozone days and the Air Quality Index (AQI)

