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

Posters
The national project team will send you posters when you register a team, which you can display in your building.

Email and social media
We will also 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 a building. You could also set your own team challenges such as walking a mountain, walking to another city in Ireland or Europe.

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 and 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 hse.ie/stepschallenge or email stepshealth@hse.ie

@hsesteps
getirelandactive | HSEstepschallenge
web | getirelandactive.ie

Thanks to Irish Heart for providing some of the information in this guide.
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.

Research tells us that those who walk together 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. So get your group out walking during your breaks and encourage them to keep it up at home with their friends and family.

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 and social interaction between staff
- 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

What do I need to do as a team co-ordinator?
- Form a team with willing colleagues of between two and 30 members.
- Give your team a name.
- Register your team online at hse.ie/stepschallenge

The national project team will then send you:
- a step counter and an information card for each team participant
- some posters
- this information card

Display the posters in your building to promote the Steps to Health challenge. The posters are also available to download from hse.ie/stepschallenge or you can order printed versions from healthpromotion.ie

Participants need to fill in a questionnaire
Ask each of your team members to complete the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q). You can download it from hse.ie/stepschallenge. This will allow participants to assess whether or not they are well enough to do the challenge or if they need to have a chat with their GP first.

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 staff to take part in the competitions.

Encourage staff to fill in information cards
Encourage staff to write their daily step count on their own challenge information cards so that they can view their progress. 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 will be recorded anonymously.

We will ask you to send this information to the national project team at the end of the annual Steps to Health challenge. This will allow the national project team to see how much progress was made nationally.

Staff may use their own step counters
Some of your team members may prefer to use 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! Unfortunately, we cannot replace broken or lost step counters.

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.