

# Walk with Ease Workplace Coordinator Kit

## Arthritis in Minnesota

As employers work with an aging workforce, the topic of joint pain, mobility and arthritis are important health issues to consider. Keeping your workforce healthy and active has many benefits, and is not only limited to mobility and pain.

Being physically active can delay the onset of arthritis-related disability and help people with arthritis manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

Helping employees with a regular walking regimen also contributes to more productivity at work, reduces the risk of chronic issues, and helps people generally feel better. The Walk with Ease program may be just the right solution to help your employees start, renew, or maintain a walking program to stay healthy.

Refer to the Arthritis and Workplace Fact Sheet at the end of this packet for more information.

### **Physical Activity can Lower Pain by 40%**

1 in 4 adults with arthritis are physically inactive even though activity is proven to lower pain by 40% when active for 2.5 hours per week.

## Your Coordinator Role

There are several ways to help your employees learn about overcoming joint pain and avoid inactivity. One is the evidence-based Walk with Ease Program. This coordinator kit can help you with:

**Awareness Information** – Fact Sheets, newsletter blurbs, and resources.

**Walking program** – Learn how you can offer Walk with Ease Minnesota (WWE MN), a low impact, self-paced walking program that can be accessed online and used in one of three ways to fit the needs of your workplace:

- Walk With Ease Self-Directed – Participants receive promotional information from you to enroll online, order their own books and track their walking activity through an app or on their own.
- Walk With Ease Self-Directed with Support – Recruit a workplace coordinator to provide support to participants over the course of the program. Participants will still enroll online, use the WWE Workbook and receive weekly e-mails from WWE MN. The coordinator can offer group walks and activities to keep participants engaged at work.
- Walk With Ease Group Leader-Led – This is a more formal program. Online training is available to become a Walk with Ease Leader. The Leader can provide instruction on exercises, lead up to three walks each week for six weeks, and keep participants engaged for the duration of the program. The training is paid for by MDH, and involves three hours of online training done at your own pace. CPR certification is required, but is not included in the online training. Contact [health.arthritis@state.mn.us](mailto:health.arthritis@state.mn.us) for more information.

**Support Materials:** This Coordinator kit includes information for the WWE MN Self-directed, Walk With Ease MN with support, and Walk With Ease Group Leader Led Classes:

- Participant Log

- Registration emails
- Suggested evaluation
- Additional Resources

## Four Simple Steps to Get Started

1. Determine the delivery method you want to use (Self-Directed, Self-Directed with Support, or WWE Group Leader-Led).
2. Promote the program and sign up participants.
3. Keep participation high by raising awareness of WWE MN.
4. Evaluate program success.

### 1. Determine the WWE method you want to use:

#### Walk With Ease Methods and Requirements

Method	Sign Up	Participation Method	Coordinator Training Required?	How to Purchase a Book
<b>Self-Directed</b>	Coordinator uses promotional materials to inform employees. <a href="https://oaactionalliance.typeform.com/to/sW4XFZ">https://oaactionalliance.typeform.com/to/sW4XFZ</a>	Participants track their walking activity.	No	Details for participants on WWE MN sign up page. First 200 enrollees have free book, the rest are \$4.95 plus shipping.
<b>Self-Directed With Support</b>	Coordinator uses promotional materials to inform employees.  Participant: a. Signs up on <a href="https://oaactionalliance.typeform.com/to/sW4XFZ">https://oaactionalliance.typeform.com/to/sW4XFZ</a> . b. Participant tells Coordinator, who creates participant roster.	Participants track their walking activity.  Coordinator sends encouragement emails and can arrange occasional group walks.  At end of program optional organization evaluation is included.	No	Details on survey sign up. First 200 enrollees have free book, rest are \$4.95 plus shipping.  Group purchasing of book available through <a href="mailto:health.arthritis@state.mn.us">health.arthritis@state.mn.us</a>
<b>Group Leader-led</b>	Coordinator receives online training and uses the WWE leader curriculum to deliver program details.	Face to face approach to teach stretching and cool down tips and walks with the group.	Yes, contact <a href="mailto:health.arthritis@state.mn.us">health.arthritis@state.mn.us</a>	Group purchasing of book available through <a href="mailto:health.arthritis@state.mn.us">health.arthritis@state.mn.us</a>

## 2. Promote the program and sign up participants.

Employees need to know about the program and how to sign up. Use the Sample Registration emails below to get interest. Be sure to complete the email with sign up information for your organization.

Email employees directly and/or place information on an internal website or in a company newsletter.

If choosing the Self-Directed with Support, use the Participant Log on the next page to track participation.

### Sample Registration Emails

#### **Are You Ready to Get Moving?**

Do aches and pains limit you from moving on a daily basis? Believe it or not, gradually adding more walking to your day could actually help you feel better and move more. Join the six-week Walk with Ease program to safely start a walking program.

Register online to receive a book with information to help you get started, and to track your daily activity. For more information, contact [<organization coordinator> <add more specific details here>](#).

#### **Try Walk With Ease – Get Moving Regularly!**

Studies indicate that regular, slow activity can actually assist people in reducing their pain. One in four adults with arthritis are physical inactive even though activity is proven to lower pain by 40% when active for 2.5 hours per week.

Walk with Ease Minnesota is a six week online program to help people move more. The program is designed for people who have aches and pains or arthritis that prevents people from being active.

Walk with Ease Minnesota provides a book filled with tips to get started, set up realistic goals, and stay motivated. The only prerequisite is to be able to be on your feet for at least ten minutes without increased pain.

For more information, contact [<organization coordinator> <add more specific details here>](#).

# Walk With Ease MN Participant Log for Self Directed with Support

(For your internal use)

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator Name \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Name	Email Address	Completed 4 of 6 weeks?

### 3. Keep participation high by raising awareness.

Participants enrolled in WWE will have weekly tips from the WWE website sent to their emails. If you wish, tailor the additional tips below to continue to encourage people to sign up for the program, to invite them to group walks you might organize, or place these in newsletters or in a wellness newsletter to keep interest in walking.

#### **Week 1: Boost Your Overall Health**

Walking is a great way to improve or maintain your overall health. Just 30 minutes every day can increase cardiovascular fitness, strengthen bones, reduce excess body fat, and boost muscle power and endurance. It can also reduce your risk of developing conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers. <tailor your message: It's not too late to join *NAME OF ORG'S* Walk With Ease program, for more information, contact XXX>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/walking-for-good-health>

#### **Week 2: Motion is Lotion**

Ever feel low energy or achy? Just 20-30 minutes of walking can help you feel better mentally and physically, and can even help your aches and pains. Motion is lotion for all that ails you! <Take a walk on *DATE, TIME, LOCATION* to refresh and walk with ease!>

#### **Week 3: Want an easy way to get healthier?**

Walking. Yes, 20-30 minutes of walking every day can improve your fitness level, improves your cardiac health, can reduce joint pain and weight gain, and can reduce your risk for cancer and chronic disease. And it doesn't have to be done all at once!

Take advantage of this "free health insurance policy"! <Go to the *Walk With Ease Minnesota Website* to sign up today!>

#### **Week 4: Improve your mood with walking**

Looking for easy ways to feel happier? There is a high correlation between regular activity and mood. Just a simple activity like walking can get your blood flowing, which helps elevate mood, helps you think better, reduces fatigue, and can reduce your risk of depression in the long run.

#### **Week 5: Start, Renew or Maintain your Activity with Walking!**

No matter where you are in your relationship with being active, you can make an effort to start, renew or maintain regular activity by building extra movement into your day. Find ways to get more active, slowly build your way to greater activity goals over time. With a regular habit, you will reap the rewards of feeling better!

## 4. Evaluate your program success

(For your internal use)

At the end of the program, it's a good idea to determine the success of your program by using the sample questions below, and add your own questions. Use the evaluation results to improve your future programs, or share with your leadership to show the importance of supporting wellness programs. Gather the information in the way easiest for you:

- Use Survey Monkey or similar app to gather information anonymously.
- Do a simple paper and pencil survey and compile results.

### Sample Questions:

1. How did you hear about this program?

- Employer
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In general, indicate the status of your health

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
<b>Before</b> WWE program					
<b>After</b> WWE program					

3. Indicate your level of confidence in managing aches and pains.

	Not at all confident					Very confident				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Before</b> WWE program										
<b>After</b> WWE program										

4. Indicate the number of days during the week you go for a walk.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Before</b> WWE program							
<b>After</b> WWE program							

5. Indicate how many minutes you walk on each of those days.

	Minutes
<b>Before</b> WWE program	
<b>After</b> WWE program	

6. In what ways would you improve this program in the future?

7. Do you have any stories to share about your participation?

# Arthritis and Walking Resources for Workplaces

## For Individuals with Arthritis:

Arthritis Foundation Website: <https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/life-stages/work/>

Osteoarthritis Society prevention Website: <https://oaaction.unc.edu/resource-library/>

Tips to get through work with Arthritis: <https://www.webmd.com/arthritis/features/ergonomics-at-work#1>

## For Workplaces:

Arthritis Hub - a resource website from the Arthritis Society: <https://arthritis.ca/living-well/forward-living/workplace/arthritis-advice-%e2%80%afworkplace-health-wellness>

Walk With Ease Videos - <https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/workouts/walking/videos/>

Arthritis Data - [https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data\\_statistics/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/index.htm)

For more resources on particular topics e-mail [health.arthritis@state.mn.us](mailto:health.arthritis@state.mn.us)

## Stay Connected with the Minnesota Department of Health

### Have a good story to share? Want more information?

If you have a success story about a participant or your workplace walking efforts with WWE, get permission from the participants and send to [health.arthritis@state.mn.us](mailto:health.arthritis@state.mn.us).

If you would like more workplace wellness information, join the MN Healthy Workplaces list by going to <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNMDH/subscribers/new?preferences=true> and signing up for "Worksite Wellness". You will receive a variety of resources to help keep your employees healthy.

## Physical Activity, Work & Arthritis

### The Cost of Arthritis

- Managing arthritis adds more than \$11,000 a year to per-person health care costs.<sup>1</sup>
- Arthritis severely limits productivity of nearly 24 million Americans and is the most common cause of disability.<sup>2</sup>
- The majority of adults with osteoarthritis (16.7 million) are working ages (18-64 years)<sup>3</sup>

### Arthritis in Minnesota

**1 in 5 adults in Minnesota lives with arthritis.<sup>1</sup>**

Arthritis is more common among older adults, but affects as many 45-64 year olds as adults 65 and older. Arthritis can affect whether a person works, how much they work, or the type of work they can do. In Minnesota, this is true for:

- 4 in 10 adults ages 18-64 years<sup>1</sup>
- 2 in 10 adults over the age of 65 years<sup>1</sup>

### Arthritis and Chronic Disease

More than half of all adults with diabetes or heart disease have arthritis.<sup>2</sup> Two-thirds of obese adults will develop osteoarthritis at some point in life.<sup>5</sup>

Minnesota	2013	2015
Adults with Arthritis	819,000	907,000
% of adults with arthritis who are inactive	33	33
% arthritis among adults with diabetes	37	40
% arthritis among adults with hypertension	37	40
% arthritis among adults with obesity	30	32

### Physical Activity Benefits All

Being physically active can delay the onset of arthritis-related disability and help people with arthritis manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Helping employees with a regular walking regimen also contributes to more productivity at work, reduce the risk of chronic issues, and generally feel better.



## Try WALK WITH EASE

The Arthritis Foundation's Walk with Ease (WWE) program is a low-cost, six-week walking program that can integrate easily into an employer's wellness program in a variety of ways.

WWE teaches participants how to make physical activity part of everyday life. Studies by the Thurston Arthritis Research Center and the Institute on Aging of the University of North Carolina show that WWE proves to:

1. Improve overall health
2. Build confidence in the ability to be physically active
3. Increase balance, strength and walking pace
4. Reduce the pain and discomfort of arthritis and general pain.

For more information, visit [health.mn.gov/arthritis](http://health.mn.gov/arthritis) or contact [health.arthritis@state.mn.us](mailto:health.arthritis@state.mn.us)

### Sources

1. Arthritis in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Health. 2019. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/arthritis/docs/mnarthritis.pdf>
2. The Cost for Minnesota Box: Yelin E, Cisternas M, Foreman A, Pasta D, Murphy L, Helmick C. National and state medical expenditures and lost earnings attributable to arthritis and other rheumatic conditions — United States, 2003. *MMWR* 2007;56(1):4–7
3. Barbour KE, Helmick CG, Boring M, Brady TJ. Vital Signs: Prevalence of Doctor-Diagnosed Arthritis and Arthritis-Attributable Activity Limitation — United States, 2013–2015. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2017;66:246–253. DOI:<http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6609e1>.
4. United States Bone and Joint Initiative: The Burden of Musculoskeletal Diseases in the United States (BMUS), Third Edition, 2014. Rosemont, IL. Available at <http://www.boneandjointburden.org/2014-reporivh21/osteoarthritis-and-allied-disorders>