



American Heart Association.  
Healthy for Good™

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# WALK MORE. STRESS LESS.

**2024 NATIONAL WALKING DAY & MOVE MORE ACTIVATION GUIDE**

**#MOVEMORE**

EAT SMART. **MOVE MORE.** BE WELL.

Join the movement at  
**[heart.org/MoveMore](https://heart.org/MoveMore)**

# LET'S GET HEALTHY FOR GOOD

What's good for your mind and body is good for your heart. The American Heart Association's **Healthy for Good™** promotes holistic well-being, with simple resources that make it easier for you to nourish your mind, heart and body one step at a time. Healthy for Good is backed by science you can trust. Join us today – and get healthy for good.

If you're reading this as an HR professional, you can share this guide to get your leadership and workforce involved. But everyone is invited! You can use these same resources to welcome your book club, church group or friends to participate.

## Step into better health.

**Did you know?**  
**National Walking Day is April 3, 2024.**

Walking is good for you. Join in the fun on the first Wednesday in April. Let's walk together to benefit our hearts, bodies and minds. Remember, exercise is one of the best ways to keep your body healthy and release stress. Regular physical activity boosts your mood, gives you energy and improves your quality of sleep.

A walk is not just good for your body, it's good for your soul. Physical activity is one of the best ways to reduce stress and boost mood. But recent reports show that walking rates are declining steadily in the US. A trend that can negatively impact mental and physical health.

Since our beginnings, the AHA has been a champion for physical activity in communities across the country. That's why we created National Walking Day more than a decade ago. Today, we know that a simple walk is one of the best ways to manage stress and improve heart health.



## National Walking Day

**Wednesday,  
April 3, 2024**

1 p.m.  
in your time zone

**Build-up and Day-of  
resources for National  
Walking Day:**

**Poster**  
(suitable for your workplace)

**Flyer**  
(suitable for company intranet)

**Selfie Sign**

**Get free resources at  
[heart.org/movemore](https://heart.org/movemore)**

**Why not give out fun prizes?**

**Find great swag at  
[shopheart.org](https://shopheart.org)**

# FACTS TO MOVE YOU

**Walk more. Stress less.** Walking is one of the simplest ways to get and stay active.



**Walking is the most popular form of exercise.** No wonder! For most people, it's safe, low- or no-cost, and it's easy to stick with. (And did we mention it's fun? Especially with friends.)



Research has shown that **walking can have a significant impact on your health by lowering your chances of heart disease.**



**Walking** at a lively pace at least 150 minutes a week **can help you think better, feel better and sleep better.**

**Make a move.** One in four U.S. adults sits for longer than eight hours each day. **Sitting for too long can hurt your physical and mental health.**



Why not swap it out? A recent study found that **swapping just 30 minutes of sitting with low-intensity physical activity reduced risk of death by 17%. If everyone increased their activity, even by a small amount, we would see an improvement in health and lower the cost of disease in the United States.**

**Sweet dreams.** Prioritize sleep and aim for seven to nine hours a night.



**Getting a good night's sleep every night is vital to cardiovascular health.** Too little (or too much) sleep is associated with heart disease, studies show. Good sleep improves mood, memory and reasoning.

**Check the stress.** Money, work and family responsibilities and health concerns are top sources of stress.



Chronic stress can impact your emotional and physical health. **Stress can increase your risk for heart attack and stroke.**



**Workplace stressors** – such as long hours, finances, job security and work-family conflict – **are as harmful to your health as secondhand smoke.**

**Pets? Let's!** When we see, touch, hear or talk to our furry friends, we feel a sense of goodwill, joy, nurturing and happiness.



**Dogs can help ease people out of isolation or loneliness.**



**Walking a dog is a great way to get exercise, for both of you.** (Bring Rex along on National Walking Day, April 3!)



More than one study has suggested that **people with dogs tend to live longer than those who don't have canine companions at home.**

# EASY FOUR-WEEK PLAN

Check out our simple four-week plan to encourage everyone to move more. We have included tips, communications and featured content that align with these weekly themes:

- 1 Walk more. Stress less.**  
(National Walking Day is Wednesday, April 3.)
- 2 Unleash the power of pets.**
- 3 Have you been moving more? Stay motivated!**
- 4 Get in the habit: Make healthy habits stick.**



TAKE STEPS TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND FIGHT STRESS

# NATIONAL WALKING DAY

Wednesday, April 3, 2024



## Leave stress in the dust.

Exercise – like brisk walking – has so many benefits! But let's focus on just one here: Exercise is the No. 1 way to fight stress. So get out of your head and on your feet. Even moderate exercise will help you to manage stress, and benefit your heart, body and mind to boot.

## Lace up for National Walking Day!

More than a decade ago, the American Heart Association started National Walking Day, which falls on the first Wednesday in April. This year, National Walking Day is April 3.

Many people will join in the fun at 1 p.m. – join a group walking then, or start one. (Of course, you can also walk solo, or take your dog along.) Not available at one o'clock? No worries! You can walk any time that day. The important thing is, you're taking steps to improve health and fight stress.

## Want company? Loop in your coworkers.

Walking is more fun with friends, and National Walking Day invites all of us to walk more (and stress less) at work and at home. Get your whole company involved.



# You earned it!

Take a 15-minute walk break today.



## Walk with a buddy

Walk with a coworker, virtually or in person.



## Walk in place

Walk, stand or stretch at your desk during a meeting.



## Walk with pets

Get those paws moving and tails wagging.



## Walk at lunch

Helps with digestion and energy.



## Walk in a club

Form a group to walk before or after work.



## Walk with kids

The perfect way to connect after school.



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# April 3 - Happy Walking Day!



## Here are ways to include everyone on National Walking Day (April 3):

### In-person workforce

Send out a company-wide message about National Walking Day and the benefits of walking. (For a template, see page 9 of this toolkit.) Organize a short, 15-minute walk near your place of business for the employees who are working in person that day. Start the walk and be sure to post a photo or video of your group on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) or TikTok using the hashtag **#WalkingDay**. We can't wait to see your smiling faces!

### Virtual & hybrid workforce

In your message to your employees, be sure to allow for those who may be working remotely. They can still participate! At 1 p.m. or anytime on April 3, those working away from your place of business can still walk and post a photo or video to social media using the hashtag **#WalkingDay**. You could also create a Zoom or Teams link during the in-person company walk, allowing those working virtually to join in real time.

### Not all business.

Not a part of a company? There's room for everyone on National Walking Day. Invite your book club, homeowners organization or church group to participate, too.

### 100 years of Bold Hearts

Even more reason to join National Walking Day this year? 2024 marks 100 years that the American Heart Association has been promoting good health. Be a part of our centennial celebration!

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Walking is good for you. In fact, it's the No. 1 way to reduce stress. National Walking Day is Wednesday, April 3, 2024. We invite companies (and other groups) to participate and walk. Everyone can join in, even employees who are working remotely. Connect on social media using the hashtag **#WalkingDay**.



## COMMUNICATIONS

Use these messages to encourage others to join our Move More movement. Customize these communications to fit your needs.

### **Support/endorsement request to your company's HR department or executive leadership**

Workforce well-being can be viewed as a challenge – or an opportunity.

Yes, our employees face stress on many fronts. But, with the help of the American Heart Association, we can encourage them to focus on their mental and physical health. Simply moving more opens the door to many proven benefits.

**We can encourage a healthier way of living for our employees by getting Healthy for Good™ with the American Heart Association.** They invite everyone to move more and commit to a healthier lifestyle. I would like your approval for our organization to participate in Move More month this April.

**On National Walking Day, April 3, we'll ask everyone to participate in a short movement break – part of a commitment to moving more all month long.** We'll have free resources available to help our employees get healthier. Weekly emails will offer science-backed steps to encourage moving more and sitting less. The suggested activities have the potential to foster morale, team-building and productivity. You can learn more at [heart.org/MoveMore](https://heart.org/MoveMore).

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## Messaging to employees/participants

*Note: Replace the information in [brackets] below with your company's particular details.*

### Week 1: Walk more. Stress less.

A walk is not just good for your body – it's good for your soul. But recent reports show that walking rates are declining steadily in this country. This trend affects the health of people you know and love.

Let's not take this sitting down! We have joined forces with the American Heart Association as part of its Healthy For Good™ initiative. We'll pass along their science-backed advice each week for a month.

Moving more – and walking in particular – has always been part of the American Heart Association's now century-long mission. That's why the AHA created National Walking Day more than a decade ago. A simple walk can kick-start healthy habits, leading to a longer, healthier life.

**Take a walk with us on Wednesday, April 3, at 1 p.m. Let's move together to reduce our stress and support our heart health. Everyone is invited:**

- **In-person employees.** We will meet [in the downstairs lobby] and take a short walk [around the park next to our office building]. The walk should take about [15] minutes.
- **Those working from home.** Join us virtually at [this link]. We hope you're able to walk, too. Be sure to spin your phone around to share the scenery from your stroll (even if it's your at-home treadmill)!

Connect with others across the nation in celebration of National Walking Day.  
**Post a picture or video from your walk to social media, using the hashtag #WalkingDay.**

**Take the next step – check out these resources about walking and exercise:**

- [Working Out to Relieve Stress](#)
- [Fit in Walking Morning, Noon or Night](#)
- [Why is Walking the Most Popular Form of Exercise?](#)
- [Get the Right Sneakers for Your Workout](#)
- [Getting Started – Tips for Long-term Exercise Success](#)



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## WEEK 2



### **Week 2: Unleash the power of pets.**

Last week, we talked about joining the American Heart Association in a four-week program to encourage moving more for better health. Welcome to week 2!

Do you have a pet at home? Perhaps a dog, a cat or maybe even a horse in a nearby stable that you care for? Well, science confirms what you've probably felt in your heart: Having an animal companion can be good for your physical and mental health.

Stop for a moment and think about taking your dog for a walk or chasing your kitten around the apartment. You and your furry friend are both getting exercise. In fact, science bears this out. Dog owners are more likely to fit in the recommended physical activity and more likely to reach their fitness goals. And having a pet may change habits in ways that can lead to weight loss, too.

So get moving with your pet! You'll both get exercise, and you may find yourself meeting other pet owners in your area. If you can't get a pet just yet, consider volunteering at a local animal shelter, pet-sitting for a friend or helping your neighbors by taking their dog for a walk.

**Additional resources are included here (no need to go fetch):**

- [Move More with Your Pet](#)
- [The DOGtor Knows Best](#)
- [5 Ways Pets Help with Stress and Mental Health](#)
- [Pet-friendly Perks are Valuable to Employees](#)

### Week 3: Have you been moving more? Stay motivated!

Welcome to week 3 of the Move More challenge.

By this point in our four-week challenge, you may have hit some bumps. Maybe other obligations kept you deskbound for most of the day. Or you had to cancel a planned walk with friends because of family obligations.

That's to be expected! Change isn't always easy.

But the important thing is to stay motivated. The rewards of moving more are definitely worth it. Remember, you are benefiting your mind, body and heart by finding time for physical activity.

**What are some ways to stay motivated? Glad you asked!**

**The next time you need a boost to keep going, check out these resources:**

- [Work Out With Peer Support](#)
- [Hate Exercise? Make Exercise a Habit](#)
- [Overcoming a Fitness Plateau](#)
- [Find Energy When You're Too Tired to Work Out](#)
- [Celebrating Your Fitness Success](#)

**WEEK  
3**





## Week 4: Get in the habit: Make healthy habits stick.

Welcome to week 4 of the Move More challenge. We hope you have participated these past few weeks. Remember: Not only is moving more good for your health, but it's fun, too!

This next week and beyond, we encourage you to make physical activity a habit. Once again, the American Heart Association is here to help, with science-backed tips on habit-building.

You may be surprised at just how easy it can be to adopt a lasting habit. Working small, positive steps into your day can help you build a healthier life routine. Learn how forming habits can even help you to stay motivated.

Explore these resources about built-to-last healthy habits:

- [Habit Coach series \(short video series\)](#)
- [Fit Bits: Tips on Habit-Stacking.](#)

**A final note: Pat yourself on the back.**

So many of you took up the challenge and found ways to move more this past month.

**Way to go!**



This year marks 100 years that the American Heart Association has been encouraging steps toward better health. You can turn to the AHA as a resource year-round. Start by joining **Healthy for Good.**

## MORE RESOURCES

The American Heart Association has many resources to help people move more and reduce stress. Visit [heart.org/HealthyforGood](https://heart.org/HealthyforGood).

### GET ANSWERS. GET RECOGNIZED.

#### Well-being Works Better™

Our [Well-being Works Better](#) platform helps business leaders promote health and well-being for all. The program uses a holistic approach (emphasizing the mind-heart-body connection), providing actionable guidance grounded in science. Your company will reap real-world benefits, including competitive advantages when hiring talent.

#### Workforce Well-being Scorecard™

Our [Workforce Well-being Scorecard](#) is designed to help employers evaluate the culture of health and well-being within their workforce. This helps companies identify gaps and determine how their progress stacks up to peer organizations. Employers completing the Scorecard will be recognized in *Forbes* based on their achievement level. (Deadlines for the two initial cycles of *Forbes* recognition are April 30 and Oct. 31.)

### BUILD A CULTURE OF WELL-BEING.

#### Heart Walk

The [Heart Walk](#) is the American Heart Association's premier fund-raising event to save lives from heart disease and stroke – this country's No. 1 and No. 5 killers, respectively. Walk for your own health and to help others.

#### CycleNation

Cycling is fun, and it's great exercise. The American Heart Association sponsors [CycleNation](#) events nationwide. Whether it's on the road or on a stationary bike, we're cycling toward better brain and heart health.

#### Field Day

Get moving with co-workers. Enjoy our [Field Day](#) games and build team rapport at the same time. You'll also be raising funds for the American Heart Association to fight heart disease and stroke.

#### CPR

The American Heart Association has set a goal of doubling the survival rate from cardiac arrest by 2030. Join the [Nation of Lifesavers](#) today! You can learn the basics of Hands-Only CPR in just 60 seconds. Learn CPR. Save a life.

### **Together Tuesdays™**

Get employee engagement back on track with [Together Tuesdays™](#), a simple weekly meal or snack time when co-workers get to know each other better. Weekly sit-down meals with family, friends or co-workers can reduce stress, boost self-esteem and connect people.

### **Recipes**

Discover how easy, budget-friendly and delicious [healthy cooking](#) can be.

### **Best Friend Fridays**

Pets reduce stress and increase productivity in the workplace. Talk to your employer about bringing your pet to work as part of Healthy Bond for Life's [Best Friend Fridays](#). Share a photo of your pet on social with the hashtag [#BestFriendFridays](#).

## **SHARE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY AND FAMILY.**

### **Heart-Check Food Certification Program**

Learn about how the American Heart Association's [Heart-Check](#) mark on food packaging helps people find foods and beverages in the grocery store that can be part of their healthy eating plan.

### **NFL PLAY 60**

This [youth health and wellness program](#) from the NFL gets kids moving! Be sure to check out the free NFL PLAY 60 app, found at Google Play or the App Store. This family-friendly app, developed by the American Heart Association, features lots of fun games and physical activities for kids.

### **School events**

Find out how to offer the [Kids Heart Challenge/American Heart Challenge](#) in your school.

Sign up to receive [Healthy for Good](#) tips, tools and more in your inbox and connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [X](#) (formerly Twitter).