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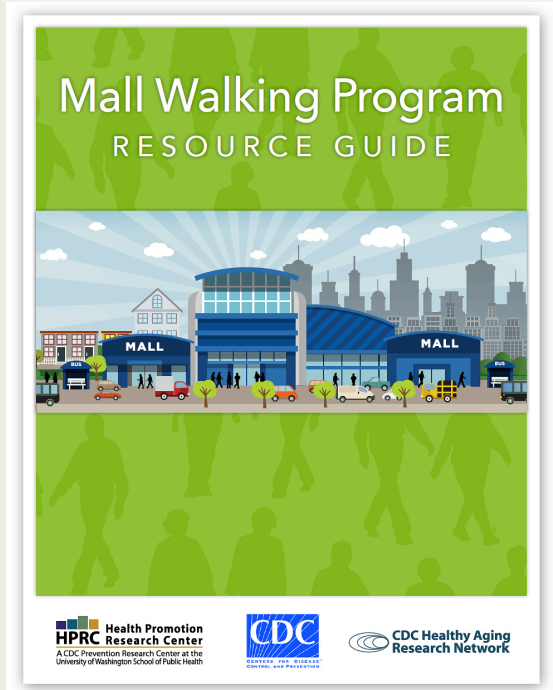
Mall Walking Program Resource Guide

The 50-page *Guide* will be available at

<http://depts.washington.edu/hprc/>

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Below is a preview of *Guide* content.



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Introduction

The goal of the *Mall Walking Program Resource Guide* (hereafter the *Guide*) is to increase information about the health benefits and evidence for mall walking and provide practical strategies for starting and maintaining walking programs in malls and other venues. The *Guide* is based on a review of research on mall walking programs; environmental audits of malls and other venues with walking programs; and data from interviews conducted with walkers and walking program providers. This *Guide* supports the National Prevention Strategies that promote walking, and informs mall and building managers, policy makers, community coalitions, aging services providers, and physical activity and public health professionals in the development and use of walking programs in malls and other public venues.

Why walk in malls?

Mall walking is second only to neighborhoods, as the most frequently used venue for walking. Mall walking is free, accessible, and has a pedestrian-friendly environment. Because malls provide sheltered indoor environments, conditions such as traffic and harsh weather have less impact on the availability and accessibility to opportunities for walking. There is the potential for promoting more walking within these public spaces especially among older adults with varying physical and cognitive abilities. Utilizing existing malls and providing effective mall walking programs have great potential for public health.

Strategies to start a mall walking program

- Learn best practices from other mall walking programs
- Locate and secure agreement from a local mall
- Estimate needed resources and secure in-kind contributions
- Establish a central location in the mall for check in
- Organize and hold a mall walking kick-off event
- Market and promote the mall walking program

New directions for walking in malls and other venues

- Partner with businesses to secure donations
- Partner with employee wellness programs to offer walking and organizations serving seniors and people with disabilities
- Integrate other evidence-based programs with mall walking

Features of Walking Programs in Malls and Other Public Venues

Walking programs vary in features and sizes. We describe several walking programs and include illustrative quotes from walkers and mall managers.

Alaska Northway Mall, Anchorage, Alaska

Some walkers have been walking in this mall for decades. The corridors have lamp posts, benches, and plants. The mall manager has a glass fronted office, and walkers wave as they walk by. The security guard knows the walkers, and is welcoming.

*The walkers are so nice. **If something happened to me, I know they would take care of me.** By walking I maintain my weight and feel better. Sometimes I don't feel like coming, but I know when I start walking I will feel better (79 yo female walker).*

*One advantage to walking here is that we are indoors and **it doesn't rain.** Having a large space that's readily available that's **safe** makes this successful. One of the benefits of the mall walkers is that there are **extra eyes on the mall.** If they see a concern they tell me (37 yo mall manager).*

Bellevue Square, Bellevue, Washington

The walking program *Walk for Life* is supported by the Overlake Hospital and the YMCA. A trained *Walk for Life* coordinator is available. A kiosk has a board with events, a binder to log distance walked, and name tags.

*Well, I know where to go shopping for my wife, because we window shop while walking! There is nobody saying, "Ah-oh, you're late." **It's up to you to do whatever you're going to do.** I like that. If you're not there, people will ask, "Where have you been?" **Somebody cares.** (79 yo male walker).*

St. Louis Outlet Mall, Hazelwood, Missouri

Doors open for mall walking 3.5 hours before the stores open. Over 100 people walk each morning.

*The walkers are **good word-of-mouth marketing for the mall.** We do it as a community service and to invite the community in (43 yo mall manager).*

Mountaineer Mall, Morgantown, West Virginia

With over 600 walkers, LifeStride is a walking program that is sponsored by the Mon Health System and Mountaineer Mall. Walkers record miles walked in activity diaries. Nurses check blood pressure monthly.

*A mall walking program is **more than just for exercise.** It provides socialization. This program helps to sustain people's lives and leads them to have better and more healthy lives (79 yo male walker).*

*We give trophies and pens when they complete 500 and 1,000 mile at our **awards ceremony** (44 yo mall manager).*

Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, Washington

A public zoo with a senior walking club.

*The social part is a reason for coming, because **I've met people I would never have meet** (72 yo male walker).*

*...It's like having an **enormous garden** of your own. It's just a delight. **I love the animals** (85 yo female walker).*

