



Local Coordinator's Guide

Greetings

Thanks for volunteering (or considering) to be a local coordinator for the upcoming *InStep for Life* Fitness Challenge sponsored by North American Division Health Ministries. The success of this program largely depends on the work of local coordinators like your self at each church, educational institution, conference office, or healthcare facility. Brief directions outlining responsibilities and resources for your use will be presented in this guide. Get further instruction and guidance from your conference *InStep for Life* Coordinator.

Description

InStep for Life is a walking/fitness program for Adventists and their friends throughout the North American Division. Emphasis will be on walking and using a pedometer to monitor steps. However, all physical activity can fit into the program by using an aerobic mile equivalency chart (on the right side of the Physical Activity Logging sheet). Our goal is to get as many church members as possible being physically active.

Who qualifies

Any Adventist member who practices regular physical activity and is interested in promoting fitness is eligible to become a local InStep for Life coordinator. If you have a background in physical education or health, that is a plus but not a requirement. If you are interested, talk to your pastor or organizational leader, to see if there is a local InStep for Life coordinator yet. If not, let them know you are interested.

Each local coordinator should be approved by the local church or participating Adventist institution (school, hospital, conference office, etc.). Once approved, contact your Conference InStep for Life coordinator and register as the local leader. Every conference is to have a designated conference wide InStep for Life coordinator. Your conference health ministry director should know who this is. As names become available, names and contact information will be available on the www.InStepForLife.com web site (see contacts).

Start date

The official start date is January, 2009. If you want your church to start a little latter due to poor weather or other problems, you can make a

special kick-off date later in the Spring. Just be sure to announce it in your church or organization.

Responsibilities

There are several things the coordinator needs to be responsible for making happen. In a small church or organization, the coordinator could do this alone, but in larger groups, you may want to have a team to help you. Here is a brief list:

- Promote the program in your local church.
- Keep track of participation (see registration and report forms in the InStep Starter Kit).
- Hold initiation meetings, helping people get started, explaining how it works.
- Order and distribute pedometers and other supplies that may be needed for participants in your organization.
- Provide progress reports to the whole church/organization periodically up front and/or in the bulletin.
- Hold periodic award sessions (perhaps quarterly) to recognize participants who have qualified for achievement awards such as the 100, 500, or 1,000 mile award, and the One Million Steps award. As people relate their personal experiences, they will encourage other members to get started or keep engaged.
- Communicate regularly with all participants, either at church or work, or with emails and church newsletters. Make the InStep for Life Newsletter available to all participating members. It is available on the InStep website.
- Report participation and progress in your church/organization to the conference InStep for Life coordinator as requested.

Resources

Go to the InStep for Life Website (www.InStepforLife.com) for more information about how the program works and resources for the local coordinator (see bottom of web page). As new promotional materials, newsletters, coordinator's instructions, updated versions of this manual, etc. become available; they will be posted on this site.

Promotional materials. Use any of the promotional materials on the website to promote InStep for Life in your local church or organization. There is a bulletin insert and a suggested bulletin announcement, Power Point slides you can modify as desired and use, and other handouts for participants.

Conference and Division resource persons. Every conference is appointing an InStep for Life coordinator at the conference level. Work closely with these regional coordinators. If you have fitness questions you can also email the division wide resource volunteers for professional guidance.

Getting started

Get interested people together to form a local core of participants. Explain how the program works. If you use the book, "Stepping into Fitness and Health," it explains how to begin in more detail than the

instructions below (available in quantity from www.Wellsource.com on the ecommerce site.

PAR-Q. Encourage each person to complete the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q) and to follow the directions given. This is for their safety (it is in the starter kit).

Pedometer Encourage everyone to order a pedometer. You can order them on the web site or order them in bulk for a special discount price (order blank is in the starter kit). Research shows that people who wear pedometers are more physically active than those who start an exercising program without one. Show your group how to use the pedometer – clipping it on the belt, being sure it is vertical and not laying over. This is critical for getting accurate step counts. If the belly rolls over the belt, have them put the pedometer more to their side or even on the back side. It must be vertical. Pedometers won't work in a pocket. Women may find the alligator clip pedometer easier to attach than the one designed for a belt.

Exercise goal A person may set goals in one of three ways: steps per day, miles walked, hiked, or jogged per day, or minutes of physical activity per day. If a person chooses the step method, explain how they can wear the pedometer for 2-3 days to see how many steps they take daily without a regular exercise program. This usually varies between 3,000-6,000 steps/day. Then set a starting goal of walking at least an additional 1000 steps a day. Each week or two add another 1000 steps to your goal until you reach a goal of at least 4000 steps above your starting level. For best health, aim for 10,000 steps a day.

If a person chooses the time method, begin at a level within their capacity even if it is only 10-15 minutes a day when first starting. Gradually increase exercise time over weeks until reaching 30 minutes daily. For higher fitness, continue to increase exercise time gradually until reaching 45-60 minutes daily. Remember, it's OK to divide the exercise into two or three 10-15 minute exercise sessions rather than doing the activity all at once.

If choosing the distance method, start at a distance that is comfortable for you. If not used to physical activity, begin by walking $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. Add an addition $\frac{1}{4}$ mile every week or two. Gradually increase your walking distance until you reach a goal of walking or jogging at least 2 miles per day, 5 or more times per week for good benefit; 3-4 miles daily for high fitness.

Stepping example If you take 4000 steps daily without any walking program, start with a goal of 5,000 steps a day the first week. This would be equivalent to about a 10-15 minute walk daily. The next week or two, when this becomes easy to accomplish, add an additional 1,000 steps (goal is now 6,000 steps per day). Keep doing this every week or two until you reach a goal of at least 8,000 steps daily (or most days each week). This moderate amount of daily activity (walking about 2 miles/day) will result in significant health improvement if done regularly. If you want to reach an even higher fitness status, gradually work up to 10,000 per day. This may take 45-60 minutes of walking daily but will result in even better health returns, especially if trying to lose weight.

Exercise logging Everyone needs to record their daily activity whether it is steps, minutes, foot miles, or aerobic miles (see aerobic mile chart) completed. Use the forms provided in the Starter Kit. Research shows that logging daily activity is important for long-term success in any fitness program. Once a week, or more often if desired, go to the web site and log steps or miles. You may want to demonstrate how easy this is to do (online logging should be available January 1, 2009. You can sign up at www.getfitadventures.com . When signing up, enter INSTEP10K for the discount code to get a 50% savings in the annual subscription for the online logging and the GetFit Adventures. The online logging makes it easy to track weekly, monthly, and yearly goals. It also verifies who is eligible for the various mileage awards (100, 500, 1000+ miles). Participating in the online fitness adventures also makes the logging more fun and increases the likelihood of long-term success.

For those who don't have access to a computer, they can simply track their own progress on the written forms and give you a monthly summary report. This allows you to track progress for the whole church and provide mileage awards, etc. when appropriate. It also gives you a more complete picture of how many are participating in your local church or organization. It's fun to add up the miles monthly for your whole group and put a brief report in your church or organization's newsletter or bulletin.

Exercise buddy Encourage all participants to have an exercise buddy; someone with whom to exercise and encourage. It might be a spouse, your teenage son or daughter, a friend, or work colleague. Plan times where you exercise together. Check on how you are each progressing. Give encouragement as needed to help them reach their goals. We are more likely to be faithful participants if we work with someone and we are accountable to someone.

Invite a neighbor We want to encourage you to invite a neighbor to join you on your fitness challenge as well. Make your exercise program social and an opportunity to become better acquainted with your neighbors. When they ask you why your church is interested in fitness, it gives you a chance to witness about your beliefs and faith. God is interested in our physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. Jesus said, "I came to bring you life, an abundant life!" Becoming fit can help you experience that abundant health and life. Share some of the handouts on fitness with them. Send them to the web site. Invite them to join you on one of your online fitness adventures. Friends are welcome to join the program.

Reporting Send a report of participation and mileage your church completes monthly to your conference InStep for Life coordinator. Their names and email address will be posted on the web site by Union and Conference as soon as they become available. Here's what to report:

1. Number of people participating in your church for the month. Hopefully you can see this growing monthly. You might have a participation chart in your church and see how many you can get to participate. Print these numbers periodically in your church bulletin/newsletter or post it on the bulleting board. You may want to specify how many are just keeping track on their own (separate from online logging) so we can add these numbers to what the computer is able to track.

2. Number of people reaching one of the Mileage Awards (100/500/1000 aerobic miles in the year) or the one million step award (completing 10,000+ steps a day for at least 100 days in one year.

3. Any special stories or experiences (plus pictures if available) that may make a good story for the Union paper or to put on the conference news web site.

Award ceremony At least once a quarter, more often if needed, plan a special awards ceremony at your church or organization. It may be between SS and church, at the potluck, etc. but when the whole church can see and hear what has been happening in people's lives. Download the certificates from the web. Print people's names, award level, dates, etc. on the certificate. Sign it or have the pastor/organization president sign it, and call out people's names and have them come up to get their awards. Have a few people primed ahead of time to share their experience. The awards ceremony gives recognition for hard work completed and inspires others to determine they would like to become active participants as well.

Meet periodically You might want to call a short meeting occasionally to invite others to get started, have the early joiners share personal experiences, answer questions, keep everyone's motivation high! Have a special potluck for the InStep for Life participants and those who want to learn more.

Plan activities Plan special opportunities for activity as a group, such as:

- Sabbath afternoon hikes to enjoy nature.
- A birding trip which incorporates walking.
- A group bike ride out through the country or by a lake.
- Volleyball or other active play nights.
- Encourage a group to join a local fun run or walk planned in your community. Train together for the event.
- Plan a weekend hiking, backpack, or biking trip.
- Go golfing as a group.

Fitness letter An *InStep for Life* Fitness Letter is available on the InStep web site. Be sure your entire group gets this letter regularly. It will have information that will help them in their goal for better fitness and health. Feel free to download them from the web sight and make them available to anyone who would like to read it.

Summary The goal is to get as many members of your church/organization as possible to be active participants. It should also be a fun time together. By encouraging people to participate, you may be saving a life and will certainly by helping them to enjoy the abundant life God want's all of us to experience. God bless as you lead out in this special health ministry in your church and in the community your church serves.

More Information

Watch the InStep for Life web site www.InStepForLife.com for further announcements and/or contact your conference InStep coordinator. When names and emails are available for each conference, their contact information will be posted under contacts on the web site.

Updated 12-17-08 DRH RB EWD