

Walk Across Canada Challenge:

A fun way to incorporate walking into the school community



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INTRODUCTION

According to [Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#) (2016), children aged 5-17 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity and several hours of light physical activity per day. Walking is a great way to help meet these recommendations.

The Walk Across Canada Challenge offers a unique opportunity to incorporate physical activity into the school day. It can be used to motivate the whole school to get active (students, teachers, staff, principals and parents), or it can be done by smaller groups within the school. The challenge also offers flexibility in how participants “walk across Canada” based on your school’s resources and capacity (e.g. access to pedometers, school track or community trails), and how long the challenge will run.

Within this guidebook, you will find class participation certificates and a variety of resources to help you track activity.

In addition, you will need:

- a map of Canada (either printed or self-made);
- one pedometer; and
- assorted coloured push pins or any other creative way to mark your progress across Canada (i.e. stickers).

Goal

To provide participants with an opportunity to enjoy regular physical activity at school.

Objectives

1. To develop physical activity skills that will last a lifetime.
2. To educate participants regarding the benefits of regular physical activity.

Why Should Your School Participate in a Walk Across Canada Challenge?

- It is fun
- It is easy
- It helps students with goal-setting
- It provides an opportunity for daily physical activity
- It gives students the opportunity to practice an activity that they can do for a lifetime
- It is inclusive
- It is a great way to promote school spirit
- It is a wonderful way to lead up to Canada Day celebrations

IMPLEMENTING THE CHALLENGE

By School: All students and staff commit to recording the number of footsteps or kilometres travelled per person over a specified time period. Why not challenge another school to see who can cross Canada first?

By Class: Students and staff of a specific class or a group of classes commit to recording the number of footsteps or kilometres travelled per person over a specified period of time. You can challenge classes to see who can cross Canada first.

By Grade: Students and staff of each class of an entire grade commit to recording the number of footsteps or kilometres travelled per person over a specified period of time.

By Household: Students can accumulate footsteps or kilometres for their household. Points can be given to the household that walks the furthest each week.

By Walking Club: Members of the school walking club commit to recording the number of footsteps or kilometres travelled per person over a specified period of time.

How Long Does the Challenge Last?

The group involved has the option of deciding the length of time for the Walk Across Canada Challenge (i.e. one month, two months, an entire semester or the entire school year).

Determining the Distance Travelled

The greater the number of participants, the quicker you will get across Canada. Distance can be calculated using footsteps, time or kilometers.

Using Footsteps

- 1) Use a conversion factor based on the estimate: **10,000 steps = 5 kilometres.**
- 2) Divide the total distance between St. John's and Vancouver (7,407 km) by 5. This would equate to approximately 1,481 "5 km" blocks. To determine the total number of steps to cross the country, you would multiply 10,000 steps by 1,481 for a total of 14,810,000 steps.
- 3) Calculate and record the total number of steps taken during each walk by all participants.

A pedometer will help you estimate the steps for your designated walking route. Simply have a walking leader wear the pedometer for one walk and record the number of steps it took to walk your designated route. You can use this number as an estimate for the other participants.

Using Time

Simply tally up the duration of each walking episode. Knowing that it would take approximately 61 days to Walk Across Canada (based on Google Maps), you can calculate that it would take about 1,464 hours to make the trek. You can figure out how many days it would take the trek, if you know how long you will walk each episode and how many participants you have.

For example, if you have a class of 30 students walking for 20 minutes/day, you could estimate that they walked 10 hours $[(30 \text{ students} \times 20 \text{ min})/60 \text{ min}]$. It would then take you approximately 145 days to cross Canada.

Using Kilometres

Either a route estimate or actual distance can be used to calculate your progress.

- 1) Route estimate:** Set up a designated route (e.g. around the playground or your track) and assign this route a distance. For example, you can simply say that every lap around the playground will equal 1 km. This can be handy if you want to Walk Across Canada in a short period of time! Just have each lap equal a larger distance (1 lap = 10 km). For example, let's say that 1 lap equals 10 kms. In a class of 30 students, each student would have to walk 25 laps to get the class across Canada (30 students X 25 laps X 10 km=7,500 km).
- 2) Actual Distance:** If a large enough group is participating, the school may decide to try and walk the actual distance (a total of 7,407 kilometres). A set route could be measured for actual distance. Every kilometre walked by a participant moves the group one kilometre closer to completing the Challenge.

TRACKING YOUR PROGRESS

Participants will need a way to track the distance travelled to monitor your progress. A push-pin can be used to represent your school's progress on the map of Canada or you can assign different coloured push-pins to classes, groups or households participating in the challenge.

It is easiest if you designate the tracking to an individual or specific class. Here are two ideas:

- 1) Classroom Tracking Chart** (Appendix A): A chart is posted in each classroom listing the names of all those participating in the challenge. At the end of each walk, participants record their distance, steps or time on the chart. At the end of each week, classes send the chart totals to the organizer (i.e. send it down to the office with the Friday's attendance).

- 2) **Individual Log Sheets** (Appendix B): Individual participants are provided with a log sheet to record their footsteps, distance or time walked. At the end of each week, participants can submit their totals to the organizer who can add them to each group's total. The organizer can schedule a specific time each week when individuals can have their efforts recorded.

Setting up Your Map

A sample challenge with 10 stops is outlined below. You can use sticker dots to mark the cities on your map. Push pins can be used to represent who is participating. Only one push pin will be needed if your whole school is walking together for the challenge. If several different groups/classes are walking, you can use a different coloured pin to represent each one.

Start by placing the push pin(s) on St. John's, Newfoundland. Move the push pin(s) to the next destination once the corresponding kilometres, steps or time has been accumulated.

Destination	Distance (km)	Steps (approx.)	Time to Walk (approx.)
St. John's, NFLD to Fredericton, NB	1,617	3,234,000	12 days 10 hrs
Fredericton, NB to Montreal, QC	819	1,638,000	6 days 13 hrs
Montreal, QC to Belleville, ON	370	740,000	3 days 3 hrs
Belleville, ON to Sault St. Marie, ON	766	1,532,000	6 days 12 hrs
Sault St. Marie, ON to Thunder Bay, ON	688	1,376,000	5 days 20 hrs
Thunder Bay, ON to Winnipeg, MB	685	1,370,000	5 days 17 hrs
Winnipeg, MB to Regina, SK	566	1,132,000	4 days 16 hrs
Regina, SK to Calgary, AB	742	1,484,000	6 days 5 hrs
Calgary, AB to Vancouver, BC	1,154	2,308,000	10 days 0 hrs
Totals	7,407	14,814,000	61 days
Source: Google Maps Walking Directions			

INCENTIVE IDEAS

Celebrating and recognizing participants' accomplishments in the Walk Across Canada Challenge will:

- Have a positive impact on participants
- Reinforce that fact that your school values physical activity
- Motivate participants to continue to be active
- Encourage others to join the challenge

Here are a few ideas that you may wish to use in your school:

- Recognize a “Walker of the week” on your morning announcements.
- If you are having classroom or household challenges, update progress regularly. Highlight which class is in the lead or which class had a great week.
- During monthly assemblies, celebrate the person, class or group that has walked the furthest. Present them with a sneaker cut-out for their door so they can display their progress.
- Provide all participants with a Walk Across Canada Challenge certificate upon completion of the initiative.
- Hold random draw where participants can win a small prize (i.e. dollar store items).
- Provide the winning class or group with a FUN day! You could plan a walk to a local park.
- Create a “Golden shoe” trophy for the winner of the challenge. This can be easily made by attaching an old sneaker spray painted gold to the top of an old trophy.

CREATIVE WALKING IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE WALKING BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL¹

- Open your school day with a walk as part of homeroom or first period.
- Take your class for a mini-walk as a mental break.
- Offer a walking club (great for students who do not play on competitive sports teams).
- Go for an end-of-the-day walk. Teachers may choose to discuss the day's key learning points on this walk.
- Designate one day of the week as a “walking” day and include walking in as many activities as possible. For example, you could have Walking Wednesdays or Trekking Tuesdays.
- Create a walking calendar. With input from students, plan a walking calendar for the year to include a different walking activity each month.
- The next time your school is looking for a fundraising idea, hold a walk-a-thon.
- Put a twist on the typical canned food drive. Students can ask family members, friends, or neighbours to sponsor them a can of food for every walking route completed.

For additional inspiration on how to get your school moving, visit:

Ophea.net

Offers health and physical activity curriculum support, professional development opportunities, and activities and initiatives to increase students' physical activity.

ParticipACTION.com

Provides evidence-based information regarding physical activity, as well as resources to get kids moving.

¹ Sweetgall, R. & Neeves, R.E. (2002). Smart Stepping teacher's guide. Clayton, MO: Creative Walking, Inc.

APPENDIX A: CLASSROOM TRACKING CHART

APPENDIX B: INDIVIDUAL LOG SHEET

Walk Across Canada Challenge

Classroom Tracking Chart – Individual Log Sheet

Day							
# of steps							
Distance in kms							
Day							
# of steps							
Distance in kms							

Walk Across Canada Challenge

Classroom Tracking Chart – Individual Log Sheet

Day							
# of steps							
Distance in kms							
Day							
# of steps							
Distance in kms							

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATE

Walk Across Canada Challenge

Congratulations We Did It!

Teacher's Name _____

Grade: _____

We worked together to walk _____

kilometres

from _____

to _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____



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