



Walk Across Texas!

<http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>

Walk Across Texas! is an eight-week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. Walk Across Texas! is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Relevance

- 27% of Texans are obese.
- 29% of American adults are not physically active at all.
- Only 25% of adults and 27% of high school students get regular, moderate exercise.
- Texas ranks 9th in the nation as the most physically inactive state.
- Texas ranks 13th as the state with the highest adult obesity rates.
- Texas ranks 7th as the state with the highest childhood overweight rates.
- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression.
- Regular physical activity is also associated with fewer physician visits, hospitalizations, and medications.



**Walk[®]
Across
Texas!**

- Chronic diseases account for 70% of deaths and 75% of U.S. health-care costs each year.
- With regular physical activity, 58% of people with pre-diabetes were able to temporarily or permanently delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.
- Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas! have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity.

Response

The Walk Across Texas! program was designed to help establish the habit of regular physical activity. For eight weeks, teams of eight people, school classes, or individuals walk 830 miles across a map of Texas.

- Visit <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>.
- The program begins with an Extension agent forming a community task force with members from targeted groups such as schools, worksites, churches, etc.
- Plan Kick-Off, Half-Way, and Recognition activities.
- Train site managers, captains, teachers, and other volunteer helpers.
- Register participants online.
- Walk for eight weeks.
- Enter mileage online.
- Provide recognition for the team walking the most miles and the team reaching the “destination” (830 miles) first.

Results

Walk Across Texas! significantly increases participants' physical activity.

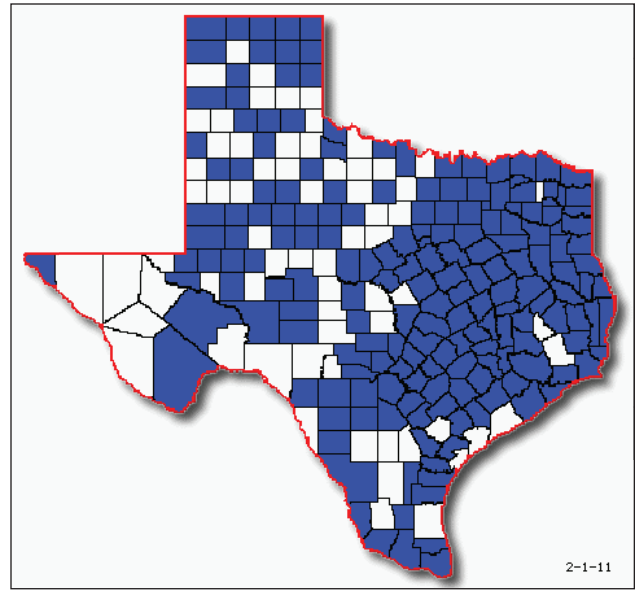
- 187 Texas counties participated in 2010.
- 42,835 total (adults and youth) registered statewide.
 - 21,260 youth participated in school teams.
- At least 10 other state Extensions have adapted this program for their residents.
- 50% of participants report feeling decreased stress after participating.

Economic Impact

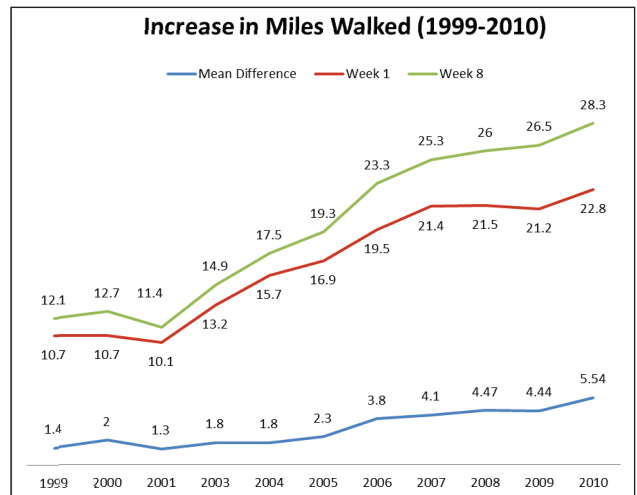
- Medical research shows that exercise and weight loss can permanently or temporarily delay the onset of type 2 diabetes in 58% of people.
- Over the lifetimes of the 15,559 team participants in 2010, it is estimated that 3,383 could prevent the onset of diabetes through increased physical activity.
- Annual health-care costs for people without diabetes are estimated between \$2,560 and \$5,642 and at \$13,243 for people with diabetes.
- Including the cost of lost wages, the total potential economic impact for the 2010 team participants is approximately \$193 million.

Participants' Comments

- Thank you Walk Across Texas...Because of this program my husband is now up every morning and on the treadmill before going to work to get in his miles. Walk Across Texas is helping us both to become healthier!!
- I lost 40 pounds. I experienced an increase in energy and was motivated to get up and get things done. My blood pressure stayed within range. My report back from my Dr. was "great diabetes control." My hemoglobin A1c was 5.6, and all my blood work was in range.
- I started WAT five months after having both knees replaced. My mileage has not been huge, but the miles I've walked have been beneficial to me. It showed me that I could do it and was helpful for my rehabilitation program. It allowed me to rejoin and be a part of the "healthy crowd."



Counties Participating in Walk Across Texas! in 2010.



Comparison Week 1 to Week 8 Individual Mileage.

- The Walk Across Texas campaign motivated me to encourage others to participate in an overall fitness program. This has led me to help others learn how to lead a healthier lifestyle and has promoted a better sense of self and well-being among those participating.