



Walk Across Texas!

<http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/>

Helping Texans Better Their Lives

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

- 32.4% of Texans are obese
- 27.2% of American adults report no leisure time physical activity
- 16.6% of youth report no physical activity
- Only 19% of adults and 30% of youth reported they get regular, moderate exercise to meet physical activity guidelines
- Texas ranks 9th as the most physically inactive state
- Texas ranks 10th as the state with the highest adult obesity rates
- Texas ranks 10th as the state with the highest rates of obese 10 to 17 year olds
- Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the risk and impact of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression

- Regular physical activity is also associated with fewer physician visits, hospitalizations, and medications
- Chronic diseases account for 70% of deaths and 86% of U.S. health-care costs each year.
- Community-wide programs like *Walk Across Texas!* have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity

Response

For eight weeks, teams of up to eight people, school classes, or individuals, virtually walk 832 miles across the state of Texas.

- Visit: <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>
- The program begins with a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service 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 various accomplishments throughout the program!



WALK
ACROSS TEXAS!

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Results

Walk Across Texas! significantly increases participants' physical activity.

- 154 Texas counties participated in 2016
- 37,851 adults and youth registered statewide
- Average age of adult participants was 42 years old
- *Walk Across Texas!* adult participants' average mileage improved by 4.68 miles from week one to week eight
- 20,008 youth participated in school teams; logging more than 942,000 miles



Economic Impact

- 92% reported they or their families benefitted from participating in *Walk Across Texas!*
- It is estimated that, of those adult participants who completed the *Walk Across Texas!* program, 2,546 could avoid or delay the onset of diabetes through increased physical activity
- Including the cost of lost wages, the total potential economic impact for the 2016 team participants is approximately \$185 million



Participants' Comments

- “The *Walk Across Texas!* [program] increased my awareness of what I need to do and how I can increase on what I am already doing ... As stated on the website, *Walk Across Texas!* helped me establish a habit of regular physical activity that I intend to continue.”
- “My enthusiasm at starting the program and setting new physical activity goals for myself, which I achieved about 70% of the time, drew my husband’s interest and he joined with me in a step challenge. It probably helped me, more than anything, to be doing it together.”
- “Because of the fact that I had to keep track of my activities I did more. My eating improved, and I enjoyed exercising more. I joined a 5K race and plan on doing another this weekend. I would never have done that if not for *Walk Across Texas!*”
- “My father was a part of my team and he started off 2016 wanting to lose weight after stepping on the scale. WAT [*Walk Across Texas!*] helped him stay motivated, eat right, and continue to shed the pounds. Since my dad was on the team, his walking partner was my mom so it helped her as well. My sister was a part of the team and it helped her stay in her running routine. I benefited from WAT because I realized 30 mins to an hour is not much time to take out of your day to do something for yourself. I can tell I’m in a better mood and I look forward to walks with the family outside and going to the gym in the morning.”

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.