



Informational Handout

Walk With Ease Program

“Walking is the most studied form of exercise, and multiple studies have proven that it’s the best thing we can do to improve our overall health and increase our longevity and functional years,” says Robert Sallis, M.D., a family physician and sports medicine doctor with Kaiser Permanente.

No matter if an individual needs relief from arthritis pain or just wants to be active, the Walk With Ease Program (WWE) can teach them how to safely make physical activity part of your everyday life.

The Arthritis Foundation developed the WWE program to encourage people with arthritis to start walking to better manage their pain and stay active. But it has also been found to be a great exercise program for a broader audience as well.

- Individuals with health risks or chronic conditions
- Sedentary individuals or beginners to exercise
- Individuals who are interested in weight management
- Individuals who enjoy walking and would like to join a group to make it more social

The WWE program offers relief, supports behavior change and is proven to increase overall health among adults. WWE also offers proven opportunities to keep adults physically active and has been useful as an adjunct to clinical care.

Based on research and tested programs in exercise science, behavior change and arthritis management, WWE has been shown to:

- Reduce pain and stiffness
- Increase balance, strength and walking pace
- Build confidence to be physically active
- Improve overall health

WWE can be self-directed or led by a certified WWE instructor. The only criteria is that participants must be able to stand on their feet for 10 minutes without increased pain. If pain is limiting, then a referral to a physical therapist to evaluate a participant’s condition is recommended. A physical therapist will create a plan of care around safe participation in the WWE program.

WWE Self-Directed Program

WWE self-directed helps people learn to walk safely and develop the habit of walking regularly. Every individual referred to the WWE self-directed program will be assigned a health coach (telephonic) to help participants get started and ensure success. A health coach performs a brief assessment at the beginning and answers any further questions they may have about the program. The individual is sent a WWE guidebook and is coached in how to get started with the self-test, encouraged to track a weekly walking log, and is directed to other resources such as the Arthritis Foundation mobile app that can link to Fitbit wearable devices, video instruction, message boards, and automated email alerts when milestones are reached. The health coach will connect with each individual once a week for 6 weeks.

CHP will work with individuals to get a physician prescription for the self-directed program to ensure their safety and readiness to start a walking program.

WWE Group Program

In the group walking program, participants meet either 3x/week for 6 weeks or 2x/week for 9 weeks in groups of up to 15 people. Classes begin with education that could include the following:

- Managing pain and stiffness
- Self-monitoring for physical problems while walking
- Anticipating and overcoming barriers to being physically active
- Getting and staying motivated to exercise
- How to build stamina and walking pace
- Goal setting

The certified WWE instructor takes the class through stretching and strengthening exercises and ends with a 10-35-minute walk as a group. Participants receive WWE guidebooks, educational materials and tools to supplement the group classes.

To refer people to the WWE self-directed program, give individuals the WWE flyer that has the contact information to get started in the program.