

# Walking Trails with Fitness Stations

## Overview

Is your school looking for a sustainable way to provide more physical activity for students and families? Consider building a walking trail! Walking trails can be used during the school day for PE class, recess or classroom lessons, and before and after school for students and community members. Take it a step further and enhance your walking trail with fitness stations, either permanent or temporary, that target various fitness skills and muscle groups.



## Take Action

- Before making plans, discuss building a walking trail with school administrators. Learn your school's approval process when facility/grounds modifications are involved.
- Plan the details: Where will the path be located? How long will the path be? What materials are needed? Will your trail include fitness stations?
  - Trails can be as cheap or as expensive as you'd like. Trails carved in a field with wooden signs can cost as little as a few hundred dollars, whereas paved trails are more expensive and

have higher maintenance costs. Choose what makes sense for your school and budget.

- Once approved, determine your budget and secure funds. Consider [applying for a grant](#), hosting [healthy fundraisers](#) and reaching out to the community for donations or sponsorships.
- Regularly host events on the walking trail to encourage frequent use. Consider hosting [Family Fitness Nights](#), [walking programs](#), [intramural sports](#), and a [walking school bus](#).
- Plan a ribbon-cutting ceremony or other kick-off where students, staff, families and the community are invited to officially open the trail. Invite local businesses, press and government officials to participate.
- Provide clear signage along the trail so students understand the direction and route. Include visual and written instructions at each station and teach students how to use each station during PE class to ensure proper use.
  - Temporary stations may include: Jump rope, sit-ups, push-ups, jumping jacks, etc.
  - Permanent stations may include: balance beams, sit up benches, tire runs, chin up bars, bench dips, push up bars, etc.
- Provide teachers with ideas on how the trail can be used during classroom lessons and link to healthy incentives to encourage teachers to increase participation.

## Social Emotional Health Highlights

Activities such as these help students explore...

**Self-Management:** Taking learning outside allows children to play and learn in a naturally relaxing environment while creating opportunities for them to explore better ways of managing emotions, re-center their thoughts and attention and practice self-reflection. Walking trails and fitness stations support children practice and experience these skills through movement and physical activity.

**Social Awareness and Relationship Skills:** Walking trails provide opportunities for group activities and relays - allowing students to explore new relationships and strengthen others. Implementing relay activities into fitness stations supports students in developing skills such as relationship-building, teamwork, and empathy and respect for others.

## Tips



If your trail will be paved, consider painting footprints of the school mascot along the route to jazz up the path!



Consider safety: Will the trail be visible at all points? Will the trail cross a parking lot or sidewalk where there are cars or pedestrians?



Think holistically: Is it possible to connect the school's trail with local neighborhoods, grocery stores, the library, or another park or playground?



Ensure activities accommodate any level of participant. Modify stations if necessary so everyone can have fun and participate.



Consider posting on school website so community members may utilize.

For more activities and ideas like this one, be sure to [sign up for our news and updates](#). And if you like what you see, please [donate to support our work](#) creating more ways to help build a healthier future for kids.

## Additional Resources

[How to Start a Walking Trail \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)

## Related Activities

### Walking Programs

Walking is an activity that is easy and accessible to most students, staff and parents and can be made into an engaging, interesting activity in many ways.

### Walk to School

One great way to encourage students to get active before school is to create a walk-to-school program. Adult chaperones monitor active students as they make their way to school!