

Step-by-step: sponsored walk

Great for: Everyone **Fun factor:** ★★★★★ **Effort:** ★★★★★ **£ potential:** ★★★★★

A sponsored walk is a great way to raise money without the need for lots of planning and volunteers. It also promotes exercise, takes your fundraising into the public eye and can bring your whole community together. And with a short, flat route everyone can join in – even those in buggies and wheelchairs.

Step-by-step

1. **Five to six weeks before:** Decide which day of the week you want to hold your walk and agree a date, checking that nothing else is going on locally that may affect numbers. Each local authority is structured differently, so it is wise to contact yours to see who you may need to consult. Start planning your route - a circular course starting and finishing at the same place makes it easier for you to sign everyone in and sell refreshments.
2. **Three to four weeks before:** Publicise your event around the community, in the local press and on social media. Explain how to enter/raise money, how long the route is, and a list of what participants might need to bring with them. Draw up a sponsorship form for entrants to collect/download. Collate participants' information, including contact details in case of emergencies or last-minute changes.
3. **One to two weeks before:** Finalise your route and draw up a map (and questions for your fact hunt if applicable). Enlist the help of volunteers. The number of volunteers required should be determined by the route distance and likely number of participants. You will need clearly visible marshals along the route and people to serve refreshments. Appoint qualified first aiders to attend and provide contact numbers to all participants. Complete a risk assessment, thinking about trip hazards, crossings, weather (heat/rain), overcrowding and how marshals can contact one another (especially if mobile phone reception is poor).
4. **On the day:** Be ready to collect entry fees and monies, and hand out maps if necessary. Can you get a local celebrity to open your event with a brief speech? A member of your organising team should remain at base camp to deal with any issues that crop up.
5. **After the event:** Thank everyone for taking part and seek feedback. Claim Gift Aid.

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Tips & advice

Timing: A Friday evening can work well, giving everyone the chance to get home, get changed and have something to eat without competing with clubs and other weekend commitments.

Rewards: Give an incentive to those taking part by offering a prize for the most sponsorship money raised, or the biggest achiever. Once walkers return, consider giving them certificates or medals.

Planning: A well-planned event will anticipate safety issues, thus avoiding any disasters on the day. If you expect large numbers, notify relevant authorities beforehand, and ensure that you have sufficient volunteers/staff to cope. Check that your public liability insurance cover is up to date.

Licensing: There are no licensing requirements arising from a sponsored walk. If you are walking on public highways or public land, it would be good practice to advise your local authority, particularly if the walk is going to involve mass crossings of people. If using roads, you may need to contact the highways team.

Boosting profits: Claiming Gift Aid is a pretty straightforward process and can add an extra 25p to every £1 raised. You don't need to be a registered charity, you simply need to register with HMRC.