



## FITNESS CRAWL

### ✓ EXERCISE YOUR WAY THROUGH TOWN

- Regular exercise reduces the risk of chronic diseases, decreases stress, and can increase life expectancy, but finding motivation to get to the gym and change old habits can be a barrier to exercising.
- Give residents an opportunity to experience different types of fitness with a fitness crawl. Similar to a bar crawl, but healthier, participants attend various fitness-related venues or programs, all while exploring their town.
- Fitness crawls are a great way to get your community active and support local businesses at the same time!

### ✓ ACTION STEPS

#### Get Connected

- Contact and build relationships with local fitness establishments (such as gyms, YMCA, exercise and yoga studios, kickboxing gyms, dojos, barre, trainers, and others) to participate in the program. This event is a great way for them to gain new customers.
- Work with participating fitness establishments to provide free or discounted rates for the fitness crawl to incentivize residents to attend.
- Partner with local organizations (i.e., police departments, local municipalities, recreation centers) to assist in planning and logistics.

#### Choose your Target Audience

- What will the age and ability range of your audience be? Decide whether your event will be targeted towards adults, older adults, and/or children.
- If you decide to host an event for people of various ability levels, consider modifying the route for individuals with a disability or unable to walk long distances or do vigorous exercises.

#### Pick a Day and Time

- Decide on the day that would attract the most residents. Avoid dates near holidays. If it will take up most of a day, aim for a weekend day.
- Decide what time of day will be best for residents. Will it be too hot to host a fitness crawl on a summer afternoon? Too cold in the winter if outdoors?

#### FOLLOW THEIR LEAD!

In 2018, Rahway hosted its first Fitness Crawl during their Winter Wonderland community day to promote local opportunities available for residents to get fit. The Fitness Crawl included an obstacle course, fitness stations for adults and children, and healthy cooking demonstrations. Participants received a medal for completing 3 fitness stations. This event was part of the MWC PLUS initiative, generously supported by the Aetna Foundation.

- Ask questions like: Do we want to host a monthly fitness crawl, seasonal fitness crawl, or host one every week with a different theme for 4 weeks?

### Map Your Fitness Crawl

- Aim to choose fitness establishments that are in a safe walking area – try to avoid major roads. If fitness establishments in your town aren't easily accessible, consider moving the event to a park, working with the town to close part of a street, or working with local businesses to host the sessions indoors. Or, partner with a local town that is more walkable.
- Choose a route that incorporates all participating fitness studios and ensure a safe corridor from one location to another.
- Recruit volunteers to encourage and oversee crawlers as they move around town. Will you hand out medals/certificates? Have volunteers help with that.

### Get the Word Out

- Post flyers around town (i.e., town hall, libraries, local shops, grocery stores) and at participating fitness establishments. Send out emails about the event and promote the event on social media.
- Challenge residents to attend with a friend or neighbor.
- Host signups at community and school meetings. Use online forms to reach residents who aren't as active in the community.
- Communicate what will happen in the event of inclement weather.
- Make clear whether the event will be child- and pet-friendly.

### Evaluate Your Impact

- Evaluation is an important process that allows your community to identify areas of improvement and define the impact of your programming.
- Track attendance. If attendance was low, keep working to improve the event and get the word out. Stay committed and focus on what you should change.
- **Before the Fitness Crawl** – Survey residents to determine things like their activity level, how often they exercise, barriers to exercising, etc.
- **After the Fitness Crawl** – Do a follow-up survey to evaluate best practices and lessons learned. Did the fitness crawl change participants' outlook on health? What did people like or not like? What can be changed?

## MORE RESOURCES

- [World Health Organization: Physical Activity Fact Sheet](#)
- [Medline Plus: Benefits of Exercise](#)
- [Mayo Clinic: 7 Benefits of Regular Exercise](#)
- [Fitness Crawl in Morristown](#)

