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posted on this website.  
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EEI and INTEC would  
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Editor:

Kate O'Connor  
(607) 624-5337  
[koconnor@intecweb.com](mailto:koconnor@intecweb.com)

# MANUFACTURER'S REPORT



## Stepping Up to the Plate for Fitness:

### PHS' Walk to Wellness

What are the health benefits of walking? We all know some common benefits like reduced risks of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Maybe you're aware of some less commonly known benefits like stress reduction and lowered cancer risk. But did you know that walking is good for your brain?

As we age, we naturally lose brain volume. There aren't really ill-effects for a long time, and then the most common consequence is difficulty remembering things. But as we continue to lose brain volume it often results in mild cognitive impairment or Alzheimer's disease. Some 2-5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease (National Institute on Aging), and as the Baby Boomers age that number is expected to greatly increase.

There is no surefire way of preventing Alzheimer's, but it appears that walking is one way to slow its progression and strengthen your brain. A recent study published by the Radiological Society of North America found that in elderly adults, walking as little as 5 miles a week is associated with a reduced loss of brain tissue. Adults who did not walk at least 5 miles a week had over 5 times the decline in cognitive function that walking adults did! Walking adults had particularly less loss of tissue in the brain areas that are in charge of memory and learning, two areas commonly associated with Alzheimer's.

In non-science speak, what does this mean? Walking is exercise for both your body and your brain! Think of it this way - if you're a

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couch potato, you will lose a large portion of your muscle volume, but walking helps prevent that. People who walk feel more energized and are able to be more active in their lives. In the same way, walking helps maintain your brain volume, making you feel better and retain your mental capabilities. And you get that benefit from a small amount of exercise, less than 1 mile a day – how incredible!

While researchers work on a cure for Alzheimer's, you can take care of your health by putting the information they have found to use – start walking! No matter what age you are, walking can be beneficial to your health, in ways you know about and ways you don't yet. After all, you didn't know walking kept your brain fit, did you? So walk, it does the brain (and body) good.

### PHS takes this to heart

Like its client organizations, Professional Health Services (PHS) wants to provide education, support and opportunities to its employees to help them be healthier, happier and more productive. But finding the right program isn't always easy — even for the experts. So just like everyone else, PHS must look for creative ways to overcome employee roadblocks to wellness and offer programs that provide real value.

Recognizing how beneficial walking is, the company's most recent wellness effort — a year-long activity-based wellness program — is designed to give employees the

opportunity to be rewarded for tackling one of the toughest, but most important, wellness challenges: regular exercise.

### Following its own advice

PHS has implemented the PHS Walk to Wellness program. Each participant clips a device called an accelerometer to his or her shoe. The accelerometer measures the number of steps a person takes, like a pedometer, but has the added benefit of measuring the velocity of that movement. Thus, it can tell the difference between walking and running, and gauge the intensity of the activity – thereby getting a more accurate measure of exercise and the number of calories burned.

PHS Vice President Karen Seal explains why the company chose this event. "Physical activity is one of the most important things anyone can do... it's like medicine for your overall health." Seal cites the physical, mental, emotional and preventive benefits of exercise and says it is the foundation for all areas of wellness.

In addition, PHS has extra motivation for its program: to learn about the wellness issues clients face first-hand. "We're a wellness company," emphasizes Seal. "How can we ask our clients to do this if we don't do it ourselves?"

### Making it simple & enjoyable

When PHS decided to implement an activity-based program, the organizers knew they needed to find a way to



accommodate a wide variety of ages, fitness levels and abilities. Walking seemed to be one of the most universally accessible activities, and it is one that the company can easily support within its workday. "People go for walks together at lunch, or take minute-long 'stretch breaks' and walk in place each hour while they are on the phone or reading. We've gotten them to think along the lines of, 'Instead of emailing or calling that person two doors down, why not stand up and knock on their door, or hand deliver reports one at a time instead of waiting for a stack to pile up?'" says Wellness Coordinator Emily Mahar.

The most ingenious thing about the program? It's incredibly easy for participants. Employees need only walk by a computer that's set up with a scanning device, and their daily step tally is automatically uploaded from the accelerometer to the program website.

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On the site, participants can set up their own profile, including height, weight, and travel itineraries. Seal says the company has its own challenge for participants who choose to sign up: one million steps in six months. But employees can create individual challenges for themselves or challenge other participants in friendly competition to keep themselves motivated. "Some people have created weekend challenges to see who can get the most steps over a weekend, and then that person has bragging rights for the week. Five others took the company challenge and decided that the first person to reach it would receive a reward from the other four," says Emily. "It's really worked to keep them moving!"

### Any fitness level, any ability

How has the program been received? 63% of PHS employees are enrolled in the program, and the program has been popular across an enormous range of ages and fitness levels. Its flexibility and customizability seem to offer something for everyone.

### Improving wellness one step at a time

The biggest difference the Walk to Wellness program has made in the lives of the PHS employees is that they are more conscious of their health — with every step they take. As a wellness company, PHS is devoted to helping client organizations develop effective wellness and health screening programs that are customized

to the needs of each company's employee population. By providing wellness to their own employees, PHS experts increase their understanding of the challenges faced by the companies they serve.

If you're interested in learning more about a customized wellness program for your company, contact PHS today:

phone:  
1-800-833-3005

email:  
[wellnessjourneys@phsmobile.com](mailto:wellnessjourneys@phsmobile.com)

online:  
[www.phsmobile.com](http://www.phsmobile.com)

## EEI Spring Occupational Safety and Health Committee Conference

May 1-4 2011

Hosted by American Electric Power

### Hotel Information:

Hyatt Regency Columbus  
350 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Phone: (614) 463-1234  
Room rate: \$139.00

**Hotel cut-off date: April 8, 2011**

For additional information, please contact Carren Spencer at [cspencer@eei.org](mailto:cspencer@eei.org) or 202-508-5166.

### Registration and Preliminary Agenda:

[Click here](#) to view the meeting page or to register online. To view conference agenda, select the Meeting Documents tab.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



### FALL Occupational Safety and Health Committee Conference

Hosted by Duke Energy  
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# CPR. Easy as C-A-B.



Based upon the *2010 AHA Guidelines for CPR & ECC*, the sequence for CPR has been changed from A-B-C (Airway-Breathing-Compressions) to C-A-B (Compressions-Airway-Breathing). Changing the sequence from A-B-C to C-A-B allows all rescuers to begin chest compressions right away.

Research shows that rescuers who started CPR with opening the airway took 30 critical seconds longer to begin chest compressions than rescuers who began CPR with chest compressions.

In previous guidelines, we recommended looking, listening and feeling for normal breathing before starting CPR. Now, compressions should be started immediately on anyone who is unresponsive and not breathing normally.

All victims in cardiac arrest need chest compressions. In the first few minutes of a cardiac arrest, victims will have oxygen remaining in their lungs and bloodstream, so starting CPR with chest compressions can pump that blood to the victim's brain and heart sooner.

**Watch our video on YouTube.™**

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and place "2010 Guidelines for CPR"  
in the search box to view our video.



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