

Survey Shows Americans Want to Improve Health but Easily Find Excuses

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Although 58 percent of American adults have resolved to make improvements in their health this year, more than half say they often find reasons not to exercise, according to an American Heart Association survey. Excuses range from too much stress at work to having nothing to wear to simple procrastination.

The American Heart Association's Start! initiative is introducing the Start! Daily Walking Guide, a FREE social media application that can get more Americans active and help them keep their health and physical activity resolutions. Nearly half of all Americans use online tools to track their health.

"The Start! Daily Walking Guide is the ideal tool to keep us committed to our New Year's resolutions," said Clyde Yancy, M.D., president of the American Heart Association. "We spend 164 more hours per year at work than we did 20 years ago, and for many Americans that means lots of time on computers. This application allows you to keep track of your physical activity, see progress, find accountability and get great encouragement."

The Start! Daily Walking Guide can be downloaded and embedded into a variety of sites including Facebook, Windows Live and iGoogle. Users get started with a quiz that generates 12 weeks worth of customized walking plans, a private journal section that lets users record their walks and reference archived exercises, and keep motivated with daily inspirational messages and heart-health tips.

Members can also chat with virtual "sole-mates" via the Start! Connections function. A previous Start! study revealed that American adults are 76 percent more likely to take a walk if another person is counting on them.

Heart disease and stroke are America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers, despite being largely preventable through a [healthy lifestyle](#). Cardiovascular disease claims nearly 865,000 lives a year and physical inactivity is a major risk factor for [heart disease](#). Physically active people reduce their [cardiovascular disease risk](#) by 30 percent. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity [physical activity](#), like brisk walking, each week. Download the Start! Daily Walking Guide at www.startwalkingnow.org.

Provided by American Heart Association

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