



# Walk With Ease & Safe Routes to Parks

Allison Harris, MPH

*Walk With Ease Program Coordinator*

*Oregon State University Extension Service*



**Oregon State University**  
Extension Service

# Physical Activity Guidelines

% **ADULTS** Reporting  $\geq 150$  Min/Week of Moderate Intensity Aerobic Activity

*NCIS, 2018; BRFSS, 2017*



United States

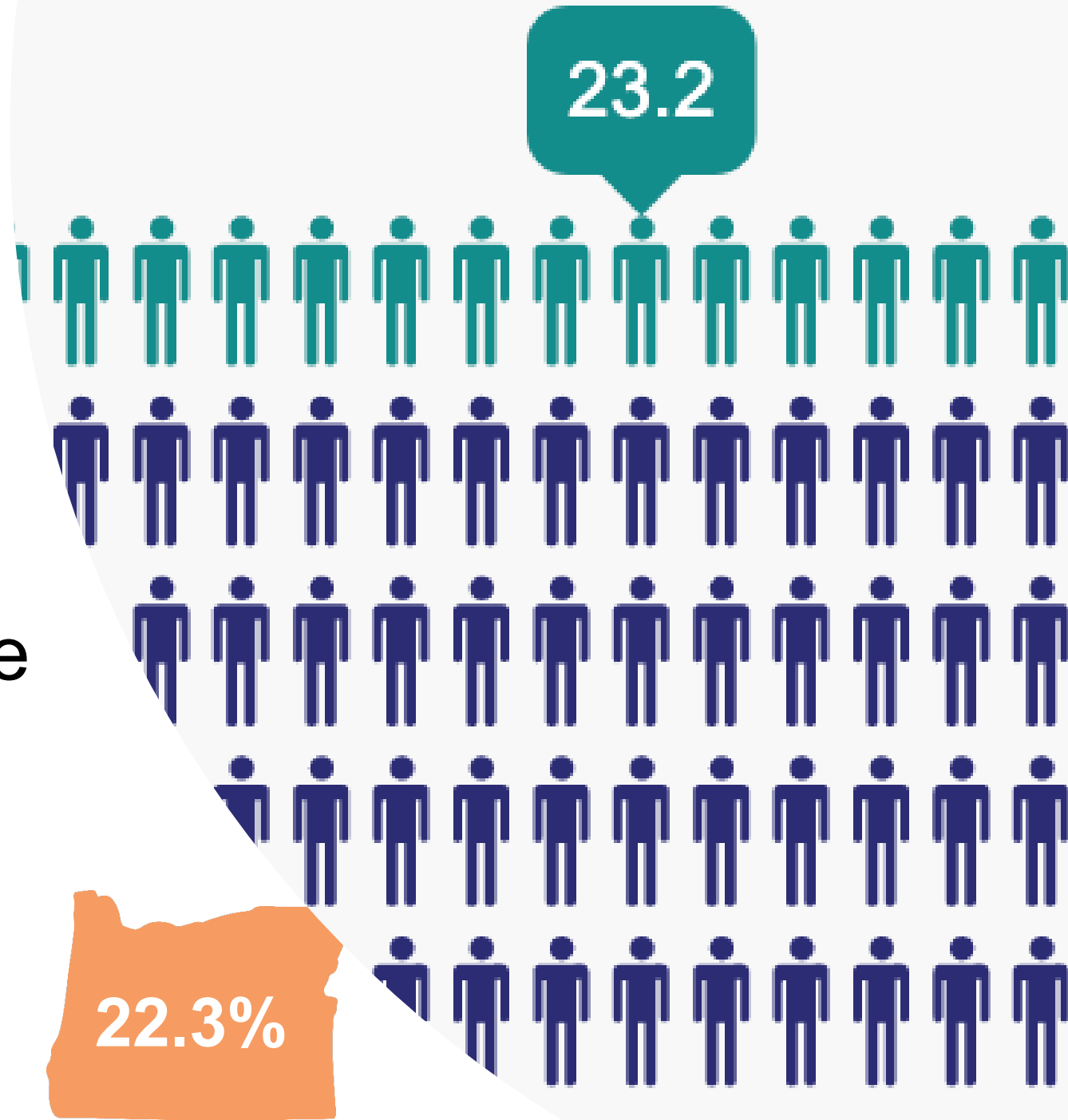


Oregon

# Aerobic and Muscle Strengthening

- % ADULTS meeting the recommendations for both Aerobic activity **and** Muscle Strengthening activity.
  - 150 min/wk (moderate)
  - 2 days/wk muscle strengthening

NCIS, 2018



# Benefits of Physical Activity

- Improve cardiovascular health
- Lower blood pressure
- Lower cholesterol
- Manage stress
- Maintain weight
- Improve your mood
- Increase creativity
- Manage pain
- For people with disabilities, physical activity can help support daily living activities and independence



**Oregon State University**  
Extension Service

# Arthritis in Oregon

- Arthritis is a common condition that can inhibit physical activity
- An estimated 1 in 4 adults in Oregon have arthritis
- In Oregon, arthritis costs \$307 million in hospitalizations alone



Gresham Class, Spring 2020. Photo credit: Stephen Ward

# Walk With Ease

# Walk With Ease (WWE) program

- Evidence-based physical activity program
- Proven to:
  - Increase physical activity
  - Decrease pain and fatigue
  - Increase physical abilities and walking endurance
- Helps make lifestyle changes

# WWE in Oregon

Three versions of the program:

- Instructor led **in-person classes**
- **Self-directed** program
- Online **virtual** classes

OSU Extension serves as the “hub” for WWE in Oregon!





# Instructor-Led In-Person Classes

- 18 sessions, held over six or nine weeks
- Health education and group walking
- Led by a trained leader
- All participants receive WWE books



**Oregon State University**  
Extension Service

## Welcome to *Walk With Ease!*

You are registering for the **self-guided** program.

If you are interested in finding a group class near you, you can search for current and upcoming classes at <http://walk.oregonstate.edu>. Your local OSU Extension office is also a good resource. **Please note that this program is only available to Oregon residents.**

### How the self-directed program works:

- 1) You complete this registration form. Make sure you enter a good mailing address so we can send you your book!
- 2) Receive your book via mail. **You can expect to receive your book within approximately two weeks of registering for the program.**
- 3) Read the book and use it as a tool to track your progress. You will set walking goals, keep track of how you feel on the days you walk, and learn tips and techniques to help you manage your walking and arthritis symptoms.
  - For more enjoyment and support, try walking with a friend! Just have your friend sign-up too so they can get their own FREE book!
- 4) Over the next 6 weeks we will send you weekly emails to guide you through the program. It's okay if you don't meet your walking goals at the very beginning, it can take a while to develop a new habit! It's important that you're taking the first step now.
- 5) At the end of the program, you will receive an evaluation. Your feedback is critical and allows us to continue to obtain funding to offer Walk With Ease resources at no cost to you!

You will receive all of this information in a follow-up email. Please note: If your address is not entered correctly, we cannot mail you a book.

We are glad you're participating in Walk With Ease! Happy walking!

#### Please Complete and Submit the Following to Get Started

First Name*	Last Name*	Email*
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Street address
<input type="text"/>

City	State/Region	Postal Code*
------	--------------	--------------

# Self-Directed Program

- Participants register online
- Everyone receives a workbook by mail
- Welcome email, six weekly emails & request to fill out evaluation
- Rolling registration
- Completely independent study!
- Available FREE to all Oregonians

# Virtual Classes

- Live, webinar-based classes with a trained instructor
- Six-week program with sessions held once weekly through Zoom
- Includes:
  - health education on stretching and exercising safely
  - facilitated discussion
- Participants walk independently throughout the week



**Oregon State University**  
Extension Service

# Virtual Classes

- Everyone receives a workbook by mail
- All sessions are recorded
- Weekly emails with additional resources and challenges
- A great option during COVID-19 restrictions!



**Oregon State University**  
Extension Service



**WWE & Safe Routes to**

# Park Access and Community Health

- Park access improves community health through:
  - Benefit from increased physical activity
  - Psychological benefits
  - Social benefits
  - Economic and environmental benefits of having a park in the community



# Walk With Ease and Park Access

- Parks and recreation agencies are major service providers for older adults
- Parks and Rec agencies can support health and wellbeing of ***everyone***, including older adults, by:
  - Making parks more accessible
  - Making parks available for evidence-based programs, like WWE



# Walk With Ease and Safe Routes to Parks

- More walkable communities help everyone become more physically active!
- Park access and walkable communities can improve participation in WWE classes and others like it

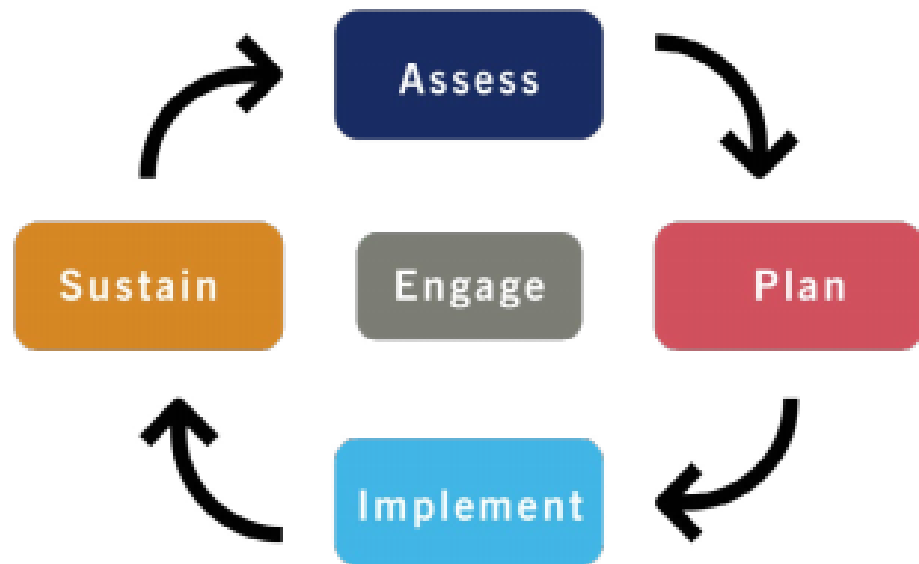


**Oregon State University**  
Extension Service



# Walk With Ease in the SRTP Toolkit

## SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS ACTION FRAMEWORK



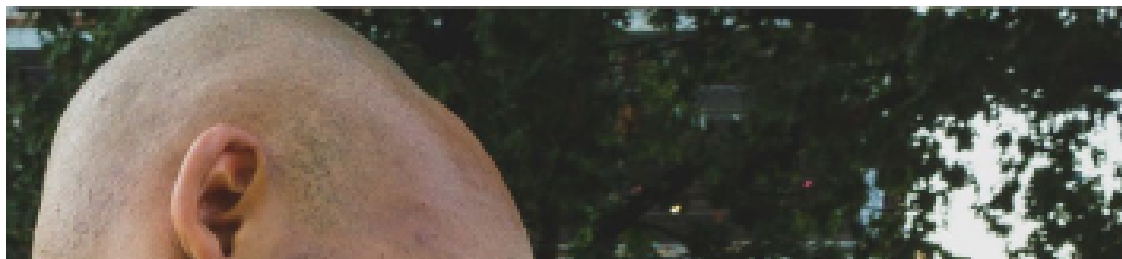
- “Walk With Ease Connection”
- Includes:
  - Tangible action steps
  - Questions to ask
  - Ways to engage Walk With Ease participants in walkability and park accessibility initiatives



## Guiding Questions

Questions to ask in this phase of the framework:

- What does the community identify as their assets and strengths?
- What do people want for their community? What do they need?
- What are the barriers to park access?
- How are people currently accessing parks? (Walking, rolling, using transit, driving, etc.)
- What information do you need to make a case for this work?
- Picture the headline that paints a portrait of success: what does it say? What data do you need to collect to tell that story and show progress?



## Walk With Ease Connection

- Do Walk With Ease programs increase the demand for walkable communities? Ask program participants in your community. You can include a short before and after survey to gauge whether the program has increased people's interest in walkable places and park access.
- Hold a walk audit during a Walk With Ease walk or even just have the group take note of park and trail use during their participation. For virtual programs, include materials for a self-guided walk audit that participants can do alone or with friends and family.
- Ask people how they get to the location for the Walk With Ease program or how they get to a location where they can do their walking. Is transportation or lack thereof a barrier?
- Ideally, participation in Walk With Ease

# Contact Information

**Allison Harris, MPH**

Walk With Ease Program Coordinator

Oregon State University Extension Service

[walk@oregonstate.edu](mailto:walk@oregonstate.edu)

Visit our website to learn more about WWE in Oregon!

[walk.oregonstate.edu](http://walk.oregonstate.edu)



Oregon State University  
Extension Service