

# 'BE BONE STRONG' Walking Club



Step-by-step instructions for launching a neighborhood walking club that supports bone health, reduces isolation, and builds stronger local connection.

**Playbook purpose:** help BHOFF leaders and volunteers create neighborhood walking clubs that are simple to launch, clear to run, and sustainable over time.

For onboarding use and website publication.

# The BHOFF vision for 'Be Bone Strong' Walking Clubs

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**These are neighborhood walking clubs.** That matters. The meeting point should be close enough that participants can walk a short distance from home to join the group whenever possible. This neighborhood model makes the club easier to attend, easier to sustain, and more likely to help neighbors connect with one another.

Walking is a weight-bearing activity that supports bone health, including helping to maintain lower-body bone density. Just as important, these clubs can reduce loneliness and isolation, create accountability, and help people get to know their neighbors better.

## What every club should deliver

Bone health	Belonging	Consistency
Regular weight-bearing movement that supports strength, balance, mobility, and lower-body bone health.	A welcoming way for neighbors to meet, reconnect, and feel less isolated.	A simple weekly structure with shared leadership so the club can continue over time.

## Required BHOFF standards

- Every neighborhood club must register with BHOFF and be included in the official BHOFF 'Be Bone Strong' Walking Club registry.
- Every club must have one designated leader and one or two co-pilots.
- Every participant must register with name, address, email address, and cell phone number.
- Every club must offer at least two pace groups: one faster and one slower. A middle group can be added if needed.
- No walker should ever be left to walk alone or be left behind.

## Startup checklist

- Register the club with BHOFF.
- Recruit a leader and one or two co-pilots.
- Choose the neighborhood meeting point and walking route options.
- Set the weekly day and time with local input.
- Create the participant registration list.
- Plan pace groups and communication.

## How to start a club

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### 1. Register with BHOFF: [REGISTER YOUR CLUB HERE](#)

- Before promoting the club, register it with BHOFF so it becomes part of the official walking club registry.
- This allows BHOFF to track growth, support rollout, and maintain a clear national network of neighborhood clubs.

## 2. Build the leadership team

- Choose one designated leader who serves as the primary organizer and point person.
- Add one or two co-pilots who can help lead pace groups, greet participants, and step in when the leader is unavailable.
- Pick people who are dependable, welcoming, and comfortable communicating with the group.

## 3. Keep the club neighborhood-based

- Define the club around one neighborhood or a clearly identified local area.
- Choose a start point that is easy to reach on foot for most members whenever possible.
- The neighborhood focus is what helps the club build real connection among neighbors.

## 4. Decide the weekly format locally

- The leader should decide the day, time, and general format with input from co-pilots and participants.
- What matters most is a consistent weekly rhythm that works for the neighborhood.
- For example, Croatan meets on Saturday mornings at 8:00 a.m. and usually walks 5 to 6 miles - but each club should choose what works best locally.

## 5. Plan routes and pace groups

- Choose safe, practical routes with clear turn points and shorter or longer options when possible.
- Create at least two pace groups: one faster and one slower. Add a middle group if participation grows or pacing needs vary.
- Each pace group should have leadership coverage.

## 6. Register every participant

- Collect each participant's name, address, email address, and cell phone number.
- Keep the roster current so leaders can communicate changes, reminders, and weather updates quickly.

## 7. Launch the first walk well

- Welcome new participants, explain the pace groups, and reinforce the no-one-left-behind expectation.
- Start with a predictable format that members can trust from week to week.

## 8. Build for sustainability

- Communicate consistently, welcome newcomers personally, and share leadership responsibilities.
- When several neighborhood clubs exist in one city or town, bring them together a few times a year for a trail walk, state-park walk, or neighborhood exchange walk.

# Operating model

## Leadership roles

Role	Primary responsibilities	Backup support
Leader	Registers the club, sets the weekly plan with local input, leads communication, and serves as the primary contact.	Keeps co-pilots informed so they can step in when needed.
Co-pilot 1	Helps manage the roster, greet walkers, support logistics, and lead a pace group.	Can run the walk if the leader is unavailable.
Co-pilot 2	Optional but strongly recommended for larger clubs; helps with pace-group coverage and communication.	Adds continuity and extra support as the club grows.

## Minimum operating rules

- Use one clearly defined neighborhood meeting place.
- Keep a current participant roster.
- Offer at least two pace groups.
- Make sure every pace group has leadership coverage.
- Communicate schedule changes quickly.
- Never leave a walker alone or behind.

**No one left behind.** This is a defining BHOFF standard. If someone needs a slower pace, a shorter route, or extra support, the group adjusts so every walker remains included.

## Suggested weekly communication

- Send one reminder before each walk with the day, time, meeting point, and route notes.
- Use text and email for quick updates about weather or schedule changes.

## Participant registration template

Name	Address	Email	Cell phone

## Launch checklist

- Club is registered with BHOFF.
- Leader and co-pilot coverage are confirmed.
- Meeting point and routes are set.
- Pace groups are assigned.
- Participant roster is started.
- Welcome message is ready.

## Sample leader welcome

**Welcome to the BHOFF 'Be Bone Strong' Walking Club.** We are walking as neighbors to support bone health, stay connected, and make sure no one walks alone. If this is your first walk, please introduce yourself to a leader so we can place you in the right pace group.

## How clubs can grow over time

- Invite members to bring a neighbor or friend.
- Celebrate simple milestones such as the first month or seasonal walks.
- Coordinate occasional combined walks with other neighborhood clubs in the same city or town.
- Take turns hosting larger destination walks at a trail, state park, or another neighborhood.

## What success looks like

**A successful club is not defined only by mileage.** It is defined by consistency, inclusion, shared leadership, and the feeling that neighbors know and support one another.

- Easy for neighbors to join
- Grounded in the neighborhood
- Organized with clear leadership
- Structured around pace groups and inclusion
- Strong enough to continue week after week

**Final reminder:** every BHOFF 'Be Bone Strong' Walking Club must register with BHOFF and be entered into the official walking club registry as part of onboarding:

**[REGISTER YOUR CLUB HERE](#)**

End of playbook