

# The Marchathon Step Challenge

## 'My Marchathon' Story

I have always been a walker in the sense that I would walk somewhere local rather than driving. When I worked in the City Centre (Dublin) I would also park centrally and then walk wherever I was going. More recently though I had gotten out of the habit of varying my walking habits, so I felt I was in a rut within my 5km limit!

A number of things really motivated me in taking part in Marchathon this year. I found the Marchathon great in previous years for helping me shake off the winter sluggishness. Being involved with a team of colleagues has been great this year. Although we can't walk together, we are connected because we are all contributing our steps and posting them up to the website. Being part of the Marchathon and in with the team 'March Hares and Tortoises' has meant that meeting the daily step targets has been essential – no excuses made for rain, sleet, wind or laziness.

My goals for the Marchathon were quite simple really. I wanted to challenge myself to up my steps in a day. I had walked the Dublin Marathon back in 2009 and I wanted to regain that feeling of rhythm in walking longer distances. I wanted to meet the weekly step targets and keep in touch with my team colleagues. I have achieved what I set out to do. I get out and walk either for a long evening walk or two shorter walks (morning and evening). Nothing has stopped me doing that. I have varied my walking circuits and I find myself more in rhythm. I'm not convinced I could walk 26.2 miles in under 7 hours right now, but I can now visualise it as a possibility.

My habits changed in terms of consistency and variety. I had gotten in a real rut – same circuit, no great push to increase distance and easily discouraged by poor weather. I now have walking circuits of 3.5km; 4.5km; 8km and 10km all in my local area. I vary what I do each day. I've also gotten myself up to move during working hours – stepping out to walk in the garden or dance to tunes on the radio. Members of the team also shared some dance videos (2,000 and 3,000 steps) which have been great. They reminded me of how much I love to dance and really get the energy going. I have also planned (and done) tasks in the garden to maximise my exercise – cutting back shrubs, walking the foliage to a composting area – back and forth, back and forth.

So, I walk further and regularly. I look forward to my walks for both the physical and mental benefits. I've done this with my colleagues – walking, dancing, and sharing the craziness together of jogging beside the bed if we need to hit a step target on a given day.

- Treasa Kenny, Maynooth University

# The Marchathon

## Step Challenge