Family Team Captain Toolkit

Your Guide to Being a Successful MDA Family Team Captain

Small steps fund powerful progress.

mdamusclewalk.org
#MuscleWalk
Muscular Dystrophy Association
Imagine a world where no one needs a wheelchair because there are cures for diseases that weaken muscles. Imagine a world where our loved ones don’t lose their ability to talk, walk, hug or breathe. Imagine a world where parents never have to worry that muscle disease will prevent their child from living into adulthood.

You can help make that world a reality.
With your help, we will get there.

Thank you so much for signing up to be a family team captain for MDA Muscle Walk. You’ve joined forces with MDA and with other families like yours who are committed to raising crucial funds and awareness to fight back against muscle disease. Whether you’re a returning team captain or new to the event, you’ve joined the most powerful and inspiring movement of families, businesses and communities united to achieving a world free of the harmful effects of muscle disease.

By starting a Muscle Walk team, recruiting friends and family to join you and raising money to fight back, you will help MDA fund research to find treatments and cures and continue to provide life-enhancing programs to your family and all people living with muscle disease, such as state-of-the art clinics, support groups and MDA summer camps.

This MDA family team captain kit will help you:

- Start your team and recruit team members
- Understand what Muscle Walk is and how donations help MDA make a difference
- Come up with creative fundraising ideas to exceed your goals
- Earn a spot in MDA’s Circle of Strength and encourage your teammates to become members as well
- Use social media to maximize your success
- Stay on track with a team captain checklist
- Enjoy every minute of your experience

You’re going to have fun. You’re going to make life-long memories. You’re going to connect with families in your community who understand what you’re going through and who will enrich your life. Most of all, you will make a remarkable difference to save and improve the lives of people fighting muscle disease. Thank you for volunteering your time, leadership and talent for such an important mission.

Welcome to the family.

TOGETHER, WE ARE PROGRESS!
5 Things to Know about Muscle Walk

1. Muscle Walk is the largest, most inspiring event of its kind that saves and improves lives.

2. Muscle Walks are non-competitive and accessible to people of all ages, genders and abilities.

3. We walk to honor our loved ones — adults and children with any of the more than 40 muscle diseases in MDA’s program. We walk to raise funds to help MDA continue to fund research and provide services to your family and to all families living with muscle disease.

4. Muscle Walk connects you with other people and organizations that care about muscle disease and understand what it’s like to live with the diseases we fight.

5. Funds raised through Muscle Walk help MDA invest in research to find treatments and cures, and support families like yours with resources and services including clinics, support groups and summer camps.

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for helping fight back against muscle disease through the MDA Muscle Walk program. Your support of MDA means the world to our family and to so many others who face the challenges muscle disease brings every day.

Our family’s journey with muscle disease began just a few days after we celebrated our daughter Reagan’s first birthday. Despite the feelings of loss and uncertainty that came with hearing “your daughter has spinal muscular atrophy,” we were determined to educate ourselves about this disease and do everything we could to give Reagan a life full of happiness and health, just as every parent wants for their child.

MDA has provided invaluable support through clinics and by connecting us with other families, giving us the tools and knowledge we need to keep our daughter healthy and happy. MDA also provides wonderful life experiences like MDA Summer Camp. It is not only “the best week of the year” according to Reagan and countless other kids, but Reagan has also gained confidence and learned how to ask other caregivers to meet her needs. Best of all MDA provides hope through clinical research, that one day there will be treatments and even a cure for muscle disease!

Perhaps most importantly, MDA gives us a way to rally our friends and family and others in our community to fight back. Through Muscle Walk and other programs, we’re able to raise funds and awareness to help speed up our progress in muscle disease research and care — for Reagan, and for other children and adults.

Thank you for your participation in Muscle Walk and for joining us in support of MDA and its lifesaving mission. Thank you for joining us as one of the more than 10,000 teams that will be walking in 2015. It means more to us than you will ever know. Together, we are Progress!

— Joe and Jenny Imhoff
Parents of Reagan Imhoff, 2015 MDA National Goodwill Ambassador
As a family team captain and volunteer leader for MDA Muscle Walk, we’re so grateful you have committed to starting a fundraising team and helping your team achieve its fundraising goal. Starting your team is easy with MDA’s online tools. Follow these four steps to get started: 1. Register, 2. Recruit, 3. Raise funds, 4. Recognize.

1. REGISTER Your Team Online
To start your MDA family Muscle Walk team, register online.
- Go to mdamusclewalk.org.

- Find your Walk by entering your ZIP code to find nearby events.
- Click on Register, then choose the option to Start a Team.
- Choose a creative team name and enter it into the team name field. If you are representing a company, you can include your company name, too.
- Set a fundraising goal for your team. We encourage every team member to raise at least $100.
- If you are a new user, provide your contact information and select a user name and password that’s easy to remember. If you are a returning user, provide your user name and password.
2. RECRUIT People to Join Your Team

Ask everyone you know to join your MDA family Muscle Walk team. Friends, family members, neighbors, classmates, coworkers — Muscle Walk is an event that unites everyone from children to adults. MDA recommends that you form a team containing a minimum of 10 people and that you recruit one co-captain for every 10 team members.

To invite people to join your team:

- Log into your participant center. Use MDA's online tools to invite team members to join you.
- Send emails with a team link to register to your network of friends, family and coworkers. MDA provides sample emails you can use to make asking people to join your team easy.

3. RAISE FUNDS to Fight Muscle Disease

MDA Muscle Walk is a fundraising event, so all team members are asked to raise money to help us achieve a world free of the harmful effects of muscle disease. Encourage your team to use MDA's easy online tools to send an email to everyone they know asking for support. Remember to explain how donations will help MDA fund research to find treatments and cures, support families like yours living with muscle disease and rally communities to fight back through education, advocacy and local programs. Try to tell at least one person every day about Muscle Walk and ask them to support you with a donation to MDA. See page 6 for fundraising ideas.

4. RECOGNIZE Team Members and Donors

Recognizing your team members is critical to keep them motivated, feeling appreciated and successful. Consider sending a weekly email to highlight the team’s fundraising success and recognize individuals for their progress and creative fundraising ideas. Hand-written notes to tell people how much you appreciate their efforts go a long way.

Likewise, be sure that everyone on your team uses our online tools to send thank-you emails to every person that makes a donation to MDA in support of your efforts. When thanking donors, remember to always emphasize how their dollars make a difference. See page 9 for more information on this.
Creative Fundraising Ideas

As the fundraising leader for your team, you can count on MDA to help support you and provide tips and guidance every step of the way. Here are a few ideas to get your team started.

Ask for Money in New and Different Ways

In addition to sending emails to everyone you know asking for a donation and sharing your personal story, here are several creative ways your team members can ask for donations.

- **“Give It Up for MDA”** week: Ask team members to join you in asking potential donors to “give up” one thing for a week — a movie, a cup of coffee, eating out for lunch, etc. — and contribute the amount saved to MDA in support of your Muscle Walk team.

- **Honor donations**: Seek donations in honor or in memory of your loved one or others who have been affected by muscle disease.

- **Make it real**: Provide your team members with examples of how donations can make a real impact to your family and to others in our communities now. Below are some examples you can share with them when they are asking potential donors for donations. This is also a great way to rally weekly fundraising as a group (e.g. Let’s all try to raise enough money this week to send a child with muscle disease to MDA summer camp! If all 10 of us raise $80 apiece this week, we can do it!)
  - $53: Provides one day of medical supplies at MDA summer camp
  - $100: Provides one support group session
  - $150: Provides a physical therapy consultation at an MDA clinic
  - $800: Provides a week at MDA summer camp for one child

Hold a Competition and/or Offer Incentives

Encourage team members to compete with one another, and offer small prizes and recognition for the top fundraisers (e.g. gift cards, etc.). Share the Muscle Walk fundraising incentives with your team and encourage everyone to first get to the $100 level to receive an event T-Shirt.

Host an Event

Most successful MDA Muscle Walk teams organize at least one fundraising event with friends and family to jumpstart or enhance their fundraising efforts. Organizing events not only raises money to fight muscle disease; it helps build awareness for MDA and team spirit among your members. Below are several event ideas. Brainstorm other ideas with your team at a kickoff meeting.

- Ask your company to offer a casual/jeans day(s) at work where employees donate $5-10 to MDA to dress down for the day.

- Hold a garage sale (this could be in your neighborhood or even on an online site like Craigslist) where the proceeds of all sales benefit your MDA Muscle Walk team fundraising.

- Host a car wash.

- Organize a bowling event. Work with your local bowling alley to secure several free lanes. Teams of 4 can pay $40 (or $10 per player) per game, with all proceeds benefiting MDA.

- Hold a silent auction, either as part of another event or as a separate event.

- Work with a local restaurant to host a benefit night, where a portion of the proceeds of the night’s sales benefit your MDA Muscle Walk team.

- Use coin canisters to canvas your favorite restaurants and bars in your neighborhood — with permission from the establishments, of course.
Become a Circle of Strength Member

The more money you and your team can raise, the bigger the difference we can make in the lives of your family and other families fighting muscle disease. So aim high! Participants who raise $500 or more earn a spot in MDA's Circle of Strength. This exclusive group of participants are Muscle Walk leaders, going above and beyond to raise money that will save and improve lives. Encourage everyone on your team to achieve this special recognition.

As part of MDA’s Circle of Strength program, members will enjoy these benefits:

- A note of thanks
- MDA Circle of Strength appreciation gift
- Recognition in local chapter Muscle Walk publications and website
- Recognition on mdamusclewalk.org

How to become an MDA Circle of Strength Member

Follow these easy steps.

1. Set your individual fundraising goal at a minimum of $500 or higher.
2. Make a personal donation to MDA to jumpstart your efforts.
3. Make it personal. Customize your online fundraising page and update it regularly. Let everyone know why you walk — your story will motivate others.
4. Send emails to your family, friends and coworkers asking them to help make a difference in the lives of families fighting muscle disease.
5. Use our online fundraising tools. Registering online will give you access to your own e-tools and resources. Don’t forget to download the Muscle Walk App in the iTunes Store or Google Play.
6. Follow up and share your progress! Inspire your supporters and contacts by keeping them up-to-date on your fundraising efforts.
7. Share the messages of hope and progress you’ll receive from MDA regarding research advances and spotlights on families rising to the challenges muscle disease brings. The information on page 9 can help you with this.
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Maximize Your Success with Social Media

Social media is one of the quickest and most effective ways to reach a lot of people who care about you and are interested in learning more about the things you care about. Sharing information, showing progress and asking for support on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social networks is a great way to boost your team’s efforts.

Download the Muscle Walk App.

“Make it mobile” and take your fundraising on the go. Spread the word and support your mission to raise funds with our Muscle Walk mobile app available in Google Play or the iTunes store.

Raise More Money with Facebook

By using the Muscle Walk Facebook application, you can use your Facebook account to extend your fundraising to your Facebook friends automatically. You can download the app from your personal participant center on your fundraising Web page.

Add the Muscle Walk Email Badge

Encourage all of your team members to add the new Muscle Walk email badge to their email signatures. With every email sent, their contacts will see their goal, current progress and be able to link directly to the team or personal page to make an online donation.

Upload Photos and Video to Tell Your Story

Get your friends and family on social media excited about your Muscle Walk efforts and keep them engaged in supporting you by sharing regular updates on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

· Upload photos from your fundraising activities and share MDA’s compelling videos about how donations make a difference, MDA summer camp, testimonials from MDA families and more. (You can find all of these videos on MDA’s YouTube channel at mda.org/youtube.)

· Consider making a one- to two-minute video of yourself sharing your personal story and why Muscle Walk is important to you, and/or a thank-you video for your donors to upload to social channels.

Follow MDA on Social Media and Join the Conversation

Follow MDA on social media to stay up-to-date on the latest scientific news and breakthroughs that you can communicate to your team members. You can find us on Facebook at facebook.com/MDANational, on Twitter at @MDAnews and on Instagram at @mda_usa. Be sure to also follow MDA’s Muscle Walk Facebook page at facebook.com/MDAMuscleWalk for important updates and to connect with other Muscle Walk team captains and share fundraising ideas.

Use the #MuscleWalk hashtag when sharing stories and information about Muscle Walk on social media and don’t forget to tag MDA in your posts.
MDA — the Muscular Dystrophy Association — is working tirelessly to save and improve the lives of your loved one and all people fighting muscle disease. As you know, muscle diseases progressively weaken muscles, often taking away everyday abilities many people take for granted — like running, dancing, hugging, smiling and even breathing. We know you’re counting on us, and there are countless people living in our neighborhoods and communities across the country as well who are depending on us to help find breakthroughs that will save and improve their lives.

Find treatments and cures

MDA is committed to finding treatments and cures, and we know new discoveries are within reach. MDA translates discovery in the lab into drug development with the goal of delivering treatments to the clinic and to your home. We expect to see more new drugs in development during the next five years than were seen in the previous 50. That is progress in action!

Support and empower families

Our MDA clinics are located in many of the nation’s top hospitals and provide comprehensive care, support and guidance through every step of the journey for someone with muscle disease and their family. These clinics serve as home to the most advanced research and treatment methods and often as sites for clinical trials of the latest experimental therapies.

Our summer camps build confidence, encourage independence and provide a life-changing experience for kids with muscle disease … while our transitions program facilitates the path to adulthood and independence for young people served by MDA.

Rally communities

MDA brings communities together to raise funds and awareness through events such as Muscle Walks and Lock-Ups. We work with lawmakers in our nation’s capital to give families a voice and empower them to take action to fight muscle disease through policy change. And we partner with generous corporations and organizations to support our work and extend our reach among people and communities everywhere.

Our Mission:

Save and improve lives for people fighting muscle disease.
MDA Family Team Captain Checklist

☐ Set a team fundraising goal and aim high. We encourage every participant to raise a minimum of $100. Remember that team members can join our Muscle Walk Circle of Strength when they raise $500. Try to reach and exceed this when setting your team goal.

☐ Plan a kickoff party to tell potential team members about the benefits of joining Muscle Walk and how their involvement will make a difference for MDA families fighting muscle disease. This is a great time to answer questions and brainstorm fundraising ideas.

☐ Encourage team members to use their personal online fundraising pages. The average online gift is 40 percent larger than a cash donation, so set up your personal Web page and use it to fundraise — it’ll greatly impact your team total.

☐ Set an example. Become a member of our exclusive group of Circle of Strength participants who are MDA fundraising leaders by raising at least $500 for MDA and encourage your team members to follow your lead.

☐ Organize a team fundraising event. Spearhead some team fundraising events such as casual days, car washes, bowling nights, parties and other outings to not only boost your fundraising total, but to also build team morale.

☐ Share your progress on social media. Upload photos of fundraising events and the walk event itself. Ask for donations. Tag friends and thank them publicly in your status posts. Upload videos filmed with your smartphone that capture your event experience and/or publicly say thank you.

☐ Honor a loved one. Teams that dedicate their team and fundraising efforts to a family or person fighting muscle disease or a loved one lost raise more money than teams who don’t. Personal stories resonate most with donors and make them want to support you and your loved ones. Encourage your family members or loved ones fighting muscle disease to join your team and participate in fundraising efforts.

☐ Double your money. Contact your personnel or human resources department to find out if your company has a matching gifts program. Encourage your donors to do the same.

☐ Collect team donations made by cash or check and turn them in the day of the walk event — or earlier. Your local MDA staff partner can determine the best and most convenient way for you to turn in your team’s donations.

☐ Keep in touch with your MDA staff partner. The MDA team is here for you and we want to help you and your team be successful. If you have questions, need fundraising ideas or other support, contact us. If you don’t know who to contact, find your local office information at mda.org/locate.

☐ Say thank you early and often. Continually thank your team members for their efforts and hard work. Send emails, hand-written notes and get the team together in person to say thank you. The same goes for your donors. Make sure you and every team member personally thanks everyone who donates to MDA in honor of your team. After the walk, send a note to team members and donors sharing your total and photos from the event.
Help Fight Muscle Disease Year-Round

When it comes to the fight against muscle disease, we won’t rest until there are treatments and cures for your family and for the tens of thousands of people in our communities and around the world who are counting on us. Your support of MDA doesn’t have to end after Muscle Walk. Here are some ways you can stay involved throughout the year.

- Volunteer at your local MDA summer camp as a camp counselor.
- Serve as a volunteer for other MDA events in your community, such as galas, golf tournaments, endurance events and more.
- Sign up to receive email updates from MDA at mda.org/sign.
- Hold a community fundraiser to continue supporting MDA with donations.

Visit mda.org and enter your ZIP code to contact your local staff partner near you for more information.

Thank you again for taking small steps to fund powerful progress. Your leadership and dedication will help us achieve a world where no one has to experience the harmful effects of muscle disease.

While I know that my child is perfect the way he is, I can’t help but be sad and angry about his diagnosis from time to time. His future with muscular dystrophy is so unknown and scary. A friend once told me that having a special needs child is like being thrown into a club you never asked to join. Before you really get to know it, the disease is a dark, sad, scary place. But Muscle Walk helped me see the side of muscular dystrophy that I’ve never seen before. Not at any point during that day did I feel sad, scared or angry. The atmosphere was filled with inspiration, love, joy and laughter. I was proud to be a part of a “club” comprised of such amazing people. The families of those affected by muscle disease reached out to us with loving arms to let us know they were there for us in any way we needed them. With just a few words and a few minutes, I felt a bond with them like I’ve never experienced before.

I am so proud of our Muscle Walk team and the many friends and family that stood up to raise more than $14,000 to help our team find cures for muscular dystrophy. The MDA Muscle Walk is so much more than just a fundraising event. The walk helps to heal the souls of people like me.

— Molly, mom of a child with muscle disease

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