

fit for life

BILLION STEPS CHALLENGE

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MEDIA RELEASE: THE BILLION STEPS CHALLENGE!

United and Powered by the gift of life – now the challenge is to WALK A BILLION STEPS, to the MOON AND BACK!

The worldwide transplant community has been challenged to celebrate the gift of life and get active by collectively walking a billion steps.

The World Transplant Games Federation (WTGF) announced today the return of its highly successful “Billion Steps Challenge” to encourage health and fitness amongst transplant recipients all over the world.

The Fit for Life! Billion Steps Challenge, proudly supported by Novartis, is an online exercise program designed to help recipients and the extended community stay active and celebrate a life where physical activity and movement is the ‘new’ normal.

Several research studies have shown that some transplant recipients have a ‘fear of movement’ following transplantation, worried that they might overdo exercise and damage their transplanted organ. The first Billion Steps challenge held in 2017 saw participants increase their daily step count by an average of 50% throughout the challenge.

WTGF President, Chris Thomas said “We can demonstrate that, with planning, advice and common sense, transplant recipients can get back into exercise and sport. There really are no boundaries”.

For many, Covid-19 has created great amounts of stress, fear and anxiety. Regular exercise benefits both the body and mind. Exercise has the ability to improve mental health, reduce the risk of depression, cognitive decline and improve overall feelings of wellbeing.

“At times like this, focussing on ourselves, both physically and emotionally is crucial. Exercise is really the best way to beat the blues and maintain a positive outlook. We are pleased to be contributing to the welfare of recipients across the world at this difficult time”, said Chris Thomas.

We know the importance of an active community around recipients, which is why this challenge is also open to the entire transplant community, including living donors, donor families, medical professionals, carers, family, and friends.

It begins on October 5th and will run formally for 10 weeks until December 13th 2020.

It is designed as a fun, community-centered interactive challenge where teams of between 2 and 5 people register online and sync their fitness trackers to record their daily steps.

The online Movespring platform also allows manual submission of steps for those who do not have a fitness tracker. Likewise all exercise types can be converted to steps. So if you prefer to go for a cycle, swim or perhaps participate in a fitness class, the easy conversion tools will allow you to convert these activities to steps.

The platform promotes healthy and fun competition between the teams, with various newsfeed and chat forums active, as well as regular messages of encouragement and updates on the leader board status. Weekly fun challenges will be set with WTGF branded hoodies up for grabs.

There is no age limit and no experience is needed. The challenge is designed to motivate all to exercise within their means, starting with some simple goals, such as walking around the block and building towards more ambitious goals.

The WTGF will be promoting ways to achieve your daily steps targets both at home and outside, taking into account different social interaction rules around the globe. The Billion Steps Challenge demonstrates to recipients that there is more to the WTGF than the highly successful Summer and Winter Games, and we plan to bring more events like this to you in the future.

To find out more about the Billion Steps Challenge or sign up to, please visit <https://wtgf.org/billion-steps-challenge>

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About the World Transplant Games Federation

The World Transplant Games Federation unites transplant recipients from across the world to promote the success of organ and tissue donation and life-saving transplantation. With more than 70 member countries, the WTGF stages the world’s largest awareness event for transplantation, the Summer World Games, to inspire the public to consider organ and tissue donation. The WTGF also inspires recipients to rehabilitate following their transplant and keep fit and healthy in their ongoing life journey.

About Novartis

Novartis is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people’s lives. As a leading global medicines company, we use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need. In our quest to find new medicines, we consistently rank among the world’s top companies investing in research and development. Novartis products reach nearly 800 million people globally and we are finding innovative ways to expand access to our latest treatments. About 109,000 people of more than 140 nationalities work at Novartis around the world. Find out more at <https://www.novartis.com>

