

# WALKING *for* HEALTH

*“I walked into the doctor’s office and she said, ‘You have diabetes.’ I knew then that I had to make a change. I always had that thought in the back of my head that I should get healthy. But when I was told I was diabetic, I realized it wasn’t an option anymore.”*

**LISA McCOY**

Patient, Indiana University Health

Before being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, Lisa McCoy was not the picture of health. “My diet was very unhealthy and I was not exercising at all,” she said.

Exercise is one of the best ways to maintain a healthy weight and fight obesity, and walking more than four hours per week reduces the risk of hospitalization for cardiovascular disease by 30 percent. Knowing this, Lisa began her journey to health by changing her diet, which helped her control the diabetes. Soon after, she decided to incorporate exercise as well. She read about a walking group organized by IU Health Bloomington Hospital, in partnership with the YMCA, called “I’m Not a Runner Walking Group!” and decided to try it out.

“I feel so much better when I am walking. If I wasn’t walking, I would be taking a lot more medication than I am right now,” she said.



Since joining the group, Lisa has found a tightknit group of friends and walking partners who hold one another accountable to show up every week. The group camaraderie creates a supportive environment as the friends keep the conversation going with every step they take. Lisa has become so

committed to her Thursday night walking group that she declines every other offer during that time. “Thursday nights are walking nights. I never commit to anything else.”

Now, two years later, she has walked a half marathon with the same group of friends and notices her speed increasing and her body being more toned. “Last September we walked the Indy Women’s Half Marathon. It was an amazing experience,” she said.

They aren’t stopping there. The group has already signed up to participate in the 500 Festival Mini-Marathon next May with hopes of completing a full marathon when they are ready.

Lisa always encourages people to find what works for them. “I think the difficult part about beginning to exercise is finding something to commit to,” she said. “Anyone can do it, you just have to want it.”

**5k**

## WEEKLY DISTANCE

Lisa’s walking group averages a 5k walk every Thursday evening, reducing their risk for disease and helping them to maintain a healthy weight.