

Join the PF3 Polk Fit Challenge in October

By: Buffy Ashmore

Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly (PF3) is excited to announce their community wide challenge to encourage physical activity and exercise. The Polk Fit Challenge is a fun and effective way to help you improve your overall health through interactive events and community engagement. This event is free to the public and made possible through a grant fund from Polk County Community Foundation (PCCF) and additional support from St. Luke's Hospital, Pro Physical Therapy and Fitness, Advanced Wellness Institute, Main Street Insurance Group and TD Bank. The Polk Fit Challenge will offer over fifty exercise related community events during the month of October. The challenge will kick-off on Saturday, September 30, 2017 at Stearns Park at 10:00am. Information about the challenge will be available, as well as participant packets. Team captains will be able to pick up their FREE activity tracker at this event and all participants will be entered to win door prizes donated by local merchants. Those unable to attend the kickoff will be able to find more information about the challenge at www.polkfit.com. The participant packet, consent form, community calendar of events, as well as an interactive Polk County trail map can also be found on the website.

Participants are encouraged to participate either as part of a team or individually. Teams are managed by a team captain and can include up to six people. The first 50 to register as team captain and submit six participant consent forms will receive a FREE activity tracker, both Android and iPhone compatible. You must be at least 18 years of age to be a team captain. Activities for the challenge will be recorded and monitored using an online platform called Challenge Runner and is available for individual participants and or team captains at <https://polkfitchallenge.challengerunner.com>. Team captains will be responsible for insuring that team participants input data regarding weekly activities. Individuals or team captains can log into the program via computer to enter data or text their minutes via cell phone. By keeping the process easy and simple, we hope to generate a high level of participation and excitement for the challenge. We encourage all types of teams including family, friends, co-workers, church, civic clubs, and schools. Our goal is to get people active and to know that there are many ways to do so.

Why participate in the Polk Fit Challenge? Aside from the benefits already mentioned, physical activity is good for your health! According to the National Institutes of Health, doing at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week has major health benefits, and some exercise is better than none at all. Those benefits include but are not limited to weight management, decreased depression, increased cognitive function and better sleep. In addition, physical activity lowers the risk for many chronic diseases including cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Strengthening the heart muscle improves its ability to pump blood to the lungs and throughout the body. Increasing blood flow increases oxygen levels throughout the body, giving you more energy.

The mission of Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly, is to implement effective strategies to promote wellness in our community. Our name emphasizes "Fit", which is one of the main goals of the challenge, but we also want to highlight the "Friendly" in our name. Our vision is to bring the community together to

become more physically active using community events to enhance the quality of life. We hope to demonstrate that physical activity can be achieved in a variety of ways. We hope Polk Fit Challenge participants will take advantage of a full calendar of events that include walking, running, classes and free gym days at Pro Physical Therapy, interval training, boot camp, and brain fitness activities. There is something for everyone, PF3 just wants people to MOVE! We hope all participants will use Social Media to help PF3 promote the Polk Fit Challenge. You can stay connected with the challenge by visiting our Facebook AND Instagram page. We encourage challenge participants to post pictures to social media of activity or events attended and use **#GetFitPolkNC**. If you are interested in the challenge or have additional questions you may contact Buffy Ashmore, Coalition Coordinator at 828-894-8271 ext. 222 or pf3coordinator@gmail.com. Join the Polk Fit Challenge today to have FUN and get FIT!

Buffy Ashmore is the coalition coordinator for Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly. She also serves as program coordinator for the Hear2Help program.