Individually-adapted health behavior change programs to increase physical activity teach behavioral skills to help participants incorporate physical activity into their daily routines. These programs are tailored to each individual’s specific interests, preferences, and readiness for change. These programs teach behavioral skills such as:

- Goal-setting and self-monitoring of progress toward those goals
- Building social support for new behaviors
- Behavioral reinforcement through self-reward and positive self-talk
- Structured problem solving to maintain the behavior change
- Prevention of relapse into sedentary behavior

Research demonstrates that individually-adapted health behavior change programs are effective in increasing physical activity as measured by various indicators.

- Time spent in physical activity increased an average of 35.4%
- Aerobic capacity increased an average of 6.3%
- Energy expenditure increased an average of 64.3%
- Percentage of people starting exercise programs increased
- Frequency of physical activity increased

These interventions were effective among both men and women and in a variety of settings, including communities, worksites, and schools.
Cuba Strategy
Step Into Cuba adapted a program initiated in Albuquerque, NM – Prescription Trails – and offered both walking prescriptions and walking champion referrals to patients at the community’s single health center. This strategy was chosen in large part because the Nacimiento Community Foundation had a healthy community coordinator/walking champion on staff, two area public health nurses wanted to promote physical activity, and a physician champion coordinating the Step Into Cuba project supported the program.

Specific Cuba Approaches

Prescriptions for Walking
Cuba physicians, nurse practitioners and public health nurses developed a protocol for walking prescription and referral to the walking champion with the assistance of a research faculty leader of the UNM PRC. A prescription/referral form was developed and is available to all practitioners and public health nurses in Cuba. The physician coordinator led inservice training sessions on walking prescription. When patients are referred, medical precautions and patient general goals are conveyed to the walking champion who develops a personal plan that often involves groups and places to walk with which the champion is familiar. A walking guide is in preparation, and a supply will be made available to practitioners who prescribe walking.

![Step Into Cuba Prescription for Health: Get up and get moving!](image)