

American Volkssport Association Facts & Figures



**AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB**
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

- ✓ The American Volkssport Association (AVA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting regular physical fitness activity for Americans as an essential component of overall good health.
- ✓ AVA is America's premier noncompetitive sports organization and administers the nation's largest noncompetitive sports program from its national headquarters in Universal City, Texas.
- ✓ Since its inaugural U.S. event in 1976, AVA now boasts of more than 200 chartered sports clubs nationwide, whose activities are monitored by ten Regional Directors who are elected by the clubs in their region.
- ✓ The volkssporting movement began in Germany in 1968 – now in more than 40 countries worldwide.
- ✓ Volkssporting is an international sports phenomenon that promotes personal physical fitness and good health by providing fun-filled, safe exercise in a stress-free environment through self-paced walks and hikes, bike rides, swims, and in some regions cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
- ✓ Walking is the most popular of all U.S. volkssporting activities and has been identified by the U.S. Surgeon General as the most beneficial form of exercise.
- ✓ Two trails are normally offered at walking events: 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) or 5 kilometers (3.1 miles).
- ✓ More than 3,000 sanctioned U.S. volkssport events are sponsored annually with participation open to the general public. No need to be an athlete.
- ✓ Special provisions also allow for the physically challenged to participate in most events.
- ✓ Nearly 350,000 people took part in AVA events during a recent two-year period.
- ✓ More than eleven million individuals have participated in volkssporting since 1990.
- ✓ Clubs schedule several walks annually usually one or two-day events on a weekend, available only on that date. Participants may start an event individually or in a group at any time during a specified time period and are allowed more than enough time to finish. These are designated as "Traditional" events.

- ✓ Also there are established walk routes that can be walked throughout the year or seasonally at the participant's personal convenience. These are designated as year-round and seasonal events.
- ✓ Many people adopt volkssporting as part of their lifestyle, and have completed hundreds of events and thousands of kilometers. While many begin walking for fitness (that inevitable medical wake-up call), most continue because of friendships and social benefits provided by the local clubs.
- ✓ A unique aspect of volkssporting is the Achievement Awards Program whereby participants may enroll in an incentive awards program keeping records of distances walked and events completed. Record books are purchased for a nominal fee.
- ✓ The record books are stamped when the events are completed and after processing at the Association headquarters, achievement awards consisting of a patch, pin and certificate are returned to the participant.
- ✓ AVA is run by an all-volunteer board of directors with a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and ten Regional Directors who form the National Board of Directors. There are six paid employees at the headquarters location.
- ✓ **Mission Statement:** Promote and organize noncompetitive fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness and friendship for all ages and abilities.
- ✓ **Vision Statement:** Increasingly engage Americans in lifelong walking and other noncompetitive physical fitness activities
- ✓ **Values Statement:** 1) Health and Safety 2) Volunteering and Public Service 3) Non-Competitive and Inclusive 4) Adventure and Camaraderie 5) Environmental Stewardship 6) Transparency and Accountability.