Firewalk: how to run your own event

Overview

A Firewalk is a sponsored challenge where participants walk barefoot across hot embers after receiving training from a professional Firewalk company. Firewalks are highly engaging events that can attract new supporters, create excellent publicity and raise significant funds for Marie Curie.



A successful Firewalk can typically raise around **£10,000**, with some groups raising even more through strong participant recruitment and sponsorship.

Key points to consider

Success Factors Successful Firewalks often have: • Strong local networks and community support • Active social media promotion • Good participant recruitment • Local business involvement • Additional fundraising activities on the night	**Timeline** Start planning **6 months in advance** to allow time for: • Securing a venue • Booking a Firewalk company • Recruiting participants • Promotion and sponsorship fundraising • Completing event planning and risk assessments When selecting a date and time, an autumn or winter evening are the most popular times of year. A Firewalk needs to take place after dark too, so weekends work well.	**Venue Requirements** Choose a venue with: • An enclosed outdoor area • Flat ground suitable for the fire lane • A separate briefing room • Registration and spectator space • Parking • Refreshment facilities • A comfortable surface for barefoot participants • Access to water if required by the provider Sports clubs, community clubs, hotels and similar venues work well. The company will often have their own requirements too.
Booking a Firewalk Company Use a reputable Firewalk company with: • Public liability insurance • Risk assessments • Safety procedures	**Participants** Recommended parameters: • 30-100 participants • Recommended minimum age 16+ • Parental consent required for participants aged 16-18	**Fundraising Model** Recommended pricing: • Registration fee: **£25-£35** • Minimum sponsorship: **£75-£125** • Firewalk company costs are typically around

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• Qualified trainers and crew The company is responsible for building, monitoring and extinguishing the fire, delivering training and managing participant safety during the challenge. There are many Firewalk companies across the UK so it's worth researching local to you. Documentation should be provided to Marie Curie for review before the event.	• Participants must be fit, mobile and able to walk safely • No alcohol before participation • Participants may be required to sign a disclaimer Check with the company for any other specifications they may have.	**£1,500**, so registration fees should ideally cover most or all of this cost. Additional income opportunities: • Raffles or tombolas • Refreshments • Donation buckets • Local business sponsorship • Corporate matched giving • Small spectator purchases such as glow sticks or themed merchandise
Promotion Promote through: • Social media • Local newspapers and radio • Community groups • Universities and student unions • Local businesses • Friends, family and volunteer networks • Marie Curie supporters and shops • Inviting a local public figure or community leader can help generate additional publicity	**Volunteer Roles** You may need volunteers to: • Welcome participants and spectators • Run the registration desk • Collect sponsorship and donations • Manage refreshments and fundraising stalls • Take photographs • Marshal parking if required • Liaise with the venue and Firewalk company	**Health & Safety** • Complete an Event Activity Plan and risk assessment in advance. You may wish to complete the detailed planning template too. • Obtain venue insurance and risk assessment documentation. • Ensure Firewalk company documentation is available. • Consider hazards including burns, slips, trips, crowd management, traffic, cash handling and food safety. • Firewalking carries an inherent risk, although risks are minimised through professional management and training. • For any emergencies on the day, call CFIT on 0800 3047112
Event Day A typical event follows this schedule: 1. Firewalk company arrives and sets up. 2. Registration opens. 3. Participants attend a 60-90 minute safety briefing.	**Resources** Your Community Fundraiser will have all the materials you need to support with running an event like this. This includes • Registration forms • Participant welcome packs • Press releases • Letter to organisations	

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4. Spectators enjoy refreshments and fundraising activities. 5. Participants complete the Firewalk. 6. Certificates are presented. 7. The company safely extinguishes and clears the fire lane. Most events run over approximately 4 hours from setup to pack down.	• Template to record sign ups • TryBooking to sell tickets online (if needed)	

Expected Outcome

With 30-100 participants, strong promotion and good volunteer support, a Firewalk can become a flagship community event, raising around £10,000 while introducing new supporters to Marie Curie. For more information and support on running an event like this, speak to your local Community Fundraiser.

Case Study: Renfrewshire Fundraising Group



The Renfrewshire Fundraising Group recruit participants through social media and local radio. They also speak to individuals from their local networks or people who have taken part in their events in the past. Incredible press coverage also happened afterwards, as a local MP took part.

The group asked people to sign up by a paper registration and kept details on a spreadsheet. The treasurer checked JustGiving pages regular as many donations were online.

The group updated the participants through the group's Facebook page, and participants received a welcome pack and all health and safety information on the night.

The Firewalk event was held at a Rugby Club in the first year and a social club in the second year. They have had a disco afterwards, which has been free of charge and held a raffle to generate more income.

Your Firewalk Event Checklist

Before the Event

☐ Organise venue and determine suitable dates
☐ Contact Firewalk company to discuss venue and dates
☐ Prepare press release from template
☐ Consider sponsorship from local business
☐ Organise drink and food or ensure this is provided by the venue

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☐ Modify the registration pack to your specific event
☐ Complete your Event Activity Plans and share with your community fundraiser
☐ Set up Just Giving Page

On the Day

☐ Obtain risk assessment and insurance from the venue
☐ Organise volunteers and photographer
☐ Registration desk (t shirts, disclaimer, photo disclaimer, sign in sheet)
☐ Collect sponsorship
☐ Entertainment for spectators
☐ Drink and food
☐ First aid – this may be provided by the Fiirewalk company
☐ Run extra fundraising activities (raffle/tombola)
☐ Photographer

After the Event

☐ Collect and bank all sponsorship
☐ Thank participants
☐ Thank Firewalk company, venue, and volunteers
☐ Post walk press release with photos
☐ Review the event with your group members and community fundraiser
☐ If any incidents have occurred, ensure that you notify your community fundraiser

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