



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

GIVING

Athletic Event Tool Kit

Your guide to creating a successful
athletic fundraiser



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Thank you for organizing an athletic fundraiser to life-changing cancer research and world-class care at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK).

Common Athletic Events and Considerations

Your first step is selecting what type of athletic event you wish to host. There are several formats to choose from:

Walk or run

Routes should be 1 to 3 miles or up to 5 kilometers (K) and as accessible as possible. Flat, paved routes with areas for water stops are ideal. If this is your first time managing a race, we do not advise distances longer than 5K. Here are some tips to prepare for your race:

- Your route should start and end at the same place.
- Do not rely solely on online maps when creating your site plan and route. Always visit a site in person and walk the potential route yourself.
- Have more than one person walk, bike, or drive the route to check the mileage.
- Avoid major streets.
- Ensure that walkers are safe from vehicles and bikes. This may involve coordinating with your local police department for traffic management.
- Have medical support at your event, such as volunteers from your local fire or police departments or a nearby healthcare center.
- Plan for water stops throughout your event.
- Check with your local municipality to confirm if permits are needed for your event.

Sports tournament

Tournaments come in many forms, no matter the sport you play.

- **Single elimination:** Once a team loses, they are out. This works best if you have many teams and a short time frame.
- **Double elimination:** A team must lose twice to be eliminated. All teams start in the winner's bracket. After a defeat, they move to the loser's bracket, where they continue to play as long as they win. The winner of the loser's bracket makes their way to the championship game against the winner of the winner's bracket.
- **Round robin:** Schedules should be created prior to tournament. Multiple teams play simultaneously for a set amount of time. All teams will play each other at least once during the tournament. Teams are eliminated based on number of losses, not number of wins. You choose the number of losses that will knock a team out of the tournament, the last team standing wins.

Field day

A field day is a family-friendly and inclusive way to engage people in many games on one playing field. Field days can involve a combination of partner and group activities, such as tug-of-war, sack races, balloon tosses, or Frisbee games. Create a schedule, limiting each activity by time.

Donated fitness class

Many instructors, fitness companies, and studios offer charity class options that can engage your community with a fun and healthy way to give back. Pick the type of workout that your community would be most excited about, and then ask your network to make a donation to your cause to attend the class!

Raising Money Through Your Athletic Fundraiser

While event logistics may feel overwhelming, your MSK contact is here to support you. To help prioritize your plans, **we recommend spending the majority of your time strategizing how your event will raise funds.** The fundraising aspect of your event matters most because it directly impacts your cause! Here are some effective ways to fundraise for MSK through your athletic event.

Sponsorships

Sponsorships are a meaningful way to create partnerships and allow companies and individuals to receive special benefits, such as logo usage on event banners and in program books, in exchange for a higher level of support. Sponsorships are usually tiered — higher priced sponsorships result in more perks. Here are a few sponsorship levels to consider.

- **Presenting or title sponsor:** Your event should have only one presenting or title sponsor, reserved for the company or individual who makes the largest donation to your event.
- **Event sponsor:** Offer two or three event sponsorship levels below your presenting sponsor, such as bronze, silver, and gold. Each level up should be more expensive and include more benefits than the level beneath it.
- **Matching sponsor:** A matching sponsor will match all donations up to the amount they are comfortable giving. Set this number in advance and advertise the match. Some ideas include the first \$5,000 raised will be matched or all event-day gifts will be matched up to \$10,000.
- **Route sponsors:** These sponsors donate to cover signage and miscellaneous costs along the route.
- **In-kind sponsors:** An in-kind sponsor donates goods or services to your event, like water bottles, T-shirts, or bags. These donations help keep your cost of fundraising low. In return, in-kind sponsors receive special recognition.

Be sure to note the appropriate tax deductibility when offering sponsorship packages. Click [here](#) to learn more from the IRS website.

Registration Fees and Tickets

Consider the following to maximize revenue through ticket sales and registration fees:

- Work backwards from your total fundraising goal to determine your prices.
- Registration fees should cover more than your cost per participant. Typically, 50% of this fee should cover the event cost, and 50% should be a donation. For example, if the cost per participant is \$20, registration fees should be at least \$40.
- MSK expects that the cost of your fundraising will not exceed 20% of the total funds raised. For example, if your expenses are \$10,000, you would need to raise \$50,000 for your expenses to account for 20% of your total fundraising.
- Many fundraisers obtain underwriters to absorb some or all of the event expenses. This type of donor covers the cost of the event out of their own pocket.

Raffle

Organizing a raffle is a fun way to raise money and create partnerships with local businesses. Solicit local businesses to donate items or experiences that can be used as prizes. Here are a few tips to secure raffle items:

- Organize a committee; members can leverage their networks for items and experiences.
- Create a list of local businesses that have the capacity to donate.
- When seeking in-kind donations, write a letter that explains what you are asking for, what the event supports, why it's important, and donation instructions. Click [here](#) to read a sample solicitation letter.
- Set a fair price per ticket based on the value of the raffle prizes. If there is one large ticket item, consider using a different type of raffle ticket with a higher price tag. When pricing your raffle tickets, offer bundles, such as \$3 per ticket, \$5 for two tickets, or \$20 for 10 tickets. Always check your math to ensure that the person giving the most gets the best deal.

General Donations and Online Fundraising

In addition to collecting online donations yourself, invite participants to ask their networks to support the event. MSK's event fundraising pages make collecting donations quick and easy. Participants can create personal fundraising pages through which all funds raised count toward your fundraising total. Consider offering a door prize or additional swag to the team or individual who raises the most funds prior to event day.

Event Logistics

Event Prep

To prepare for a successful event:

- If your event is outdoors, formulate a backup plan in case of inclement weather.
- Make sure you are close to hitting your goal for ticket sales or registrations.
- Calculate your expenses and how much revenue you will need to generate on event day.
- Check in on your traffic control, medical support, and water stops.
- Send your participants a “Know Before You Go” communication to answer frequently asked questions, including arrival time and parking information.
- Make a volunteer plan with specific jobs for all volunteers and event day schedule.
- Build pre-event excitement through social media and exclusive attendee communications.

Event Day

- Mark the event with ample signage so participants can navigate easily.
- Set up a check-in table with registration lists, so you know who is in attendance.
- Have a system in place for day-of ticket sales and registrations.
- Assign volunteers to specific roles.
- Stick to your schedule.
- If you have speakers or presenters, create and follow a day of schedule.
- Take photos and post on social media throughout the day.
- Livestream the event to supporters around the world.

Event Follow-Up

Fundraising does not end when your participants cross the finish line! Long-term stewardship is key to keeping your guests engaged until your next event.

- Thank your athletes, guests, sponsors, and volunteers.
- Share your fundraising total and inspire last-minute donations through a targeted email and social media push. Include photos from your event.
- Solicit feedback! Find out what participants enjoyed and how you can improve next year.



Host a Virtual Fundraiser

Create Your Own Athletic Adventure

Bring your extended network together to compete in an athletic event in which geography is not a consideration. Participants can select the individual challenge that they feel comfortable completing, and people from around the world can participate simultaneously. A few examples include:

- Walking or running a certain number of miles within a set time frame
- Playing a certain number of golf holes
- Swimming a certain number of laps
- Doing a certain number of squats or push-ups
- Having a jump rope challenge

Set a donation amount per challenge completed. For example, a participant asks for a pledge of \$10 per push-up completed within an hour. That athlete gets 30 supporters and completes 40 push-ups in one hour, raising at least \$12,000.

You can do all your fundraising through your MSK fundraising pages. Keep track of distance progress through Map My Run or Strava; these distance-tracking apps are available for download on Apple and Android devices.

Pro Tip: Hold a “Create my Playlist” campaign. For each \$10 donation, a donor may select one song to be added to your event-day playlist. Donors of all levels can get involved!

Additional fundraising considerations:

Make your virtual athletic event ticketed to raise extra funds. Require participants to make a donation to your MSK fundraising page for access to your virtual event. Offer digital sponsorship recognition opportunities through social media and virtual event branding to raise even more funds for MSK.

Virtual Event Day

- Email participants the instructions. Offer a personal contact for those who need help troubleshooting.
- Test video and audio equipment for any speakers during the event.
- Update participants throughout the day on fundraising and athletic results.
- Don't forget to thank your supporters before, during, and after your event.

Ready to create an athletic fundraiser? Click [here](#) to get started!



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To learn more about fundraising for MSK please contact us at communityfundraising@mskcc.org