

Taiwan kicks off islandwide walking tours



Chiara Devittori from Switzerland is prepared to experience Taiwan on foot. (CNA)

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The Department of Health's Bureau of Health Promotion and Taipei-based Hope Cultural and Educational Foundation co-launched a 45-day walking activity to 19 cities and counties around Taiwan Nov. 16, in hopes of encouraging the sport in the nation.

"Doing sports allows one to be fit and cheerful," ROC President Ma Ying-jeou said at the opening ceremony in the Presidential Office. "It also stimulates brain activity, improves memory and promotes clear thinking, as indicated in a study by John J. Ratey, associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School."

BHP Director-General Chiou Shu-ti said, "Walking is a gentle and simple exercise with no special equipment required. One only needs to wear light clothing, sports shoes, walk at a pace of 4 kilometers per hour, and 300 calories will be burned.

"We encourage everyone to develop regular exercising habits to prevent chronic diseases, accelerate the metabolism of fat, reduce the likelihood of cancer, strengthen muscle tissue and functions, lower emotional pressure and maintain a healthy weight," Chiou said.

According to the BHP, the event has attracted many foreign participants, including Bart Burman from Belgium, Edo Impellizzeri from Italy, Bernard Geradts, Lo Liebrechts and Hans Van Wuijckhuise from the Netherlands, and Franco Devittori and his wife Chiara Devittori from Switzerland.

The BHP added that the total route of the activity is 1,099 km with walkers set to return to Taipei Dec. 30. (HZW)

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