

CELEBRATE HEALTHY LIVING

K-STATE Research and Extension

Walk Kansas

Activity Guide

Want to feel better and have more energy? Maybe you need to blow off some steam from a stressful day or need to get better sleep. Regular exercise can help you achieve this and more. The health benefits from regular exercise and physical activity are hard to ignore, and they are available to everyone, regardless of age, sex, or physical ability. Another fantastic thing about exercise — it's fun!

Walk Kansas is based on *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. As you add more physical activity to your daily routine, we want you to focus on posture and include strengthening exercises at least two days per week.

Posture Power

When you practice good posture, your spine is strong and stable, and you naturally use your muscles correctly. Good posture helps maintain natural curves in your spine. Poor posture does the opposite, which can stress and pull muscles.

Practice good posture when walking. You should be able to draw a straight line from your ear down to your shoulder, to your hip, knee, and ankle. Tighten your stomach muscles and tuck your pelvis under your torso.

You also feel better when you apply good posture because you carry yourself better, relieving tension throughout your body. Another bonus — when you practice good posture, you will appear more confident and it can make you look up to 10 pounds thinner — instantly!

Strength Training Counts

We start losing muscle around age 30, and the rate of muscle loss accelerates around age 50. Some muscle loss is part of the aging process, but inactivity accounts for the rest. Progressive strength training can prevent muscle loss, increase strength and bone density. It can improve your balance, coordination, and agility, allowing you to perform everyday movements much easier.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans include a recommendation for adults to do muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days per week. On your Walk Kansas Activity Log, check the “strengthening” box on days you do strengthening exercises. You can also count the time you spend doing strengthening exercises in your total Walk Kansas minutes.

Not sure how to do strengthening exercises? You will find instructional videos at www.walkkansas.org under “Physical Activity,” and your weekly program newsletter will offer tips and links to more resources. Consider taking a strength training class, if one is offered in your community, to learn basic techniques.



Walk Kansas

Physicians say that if walking were a pill, it would be the most widely prescribed medication. The reason we promote walking is that almost anyone can do it and it is good for your heart.

Physical activity versus exercise — there is a difference. Physical activity is anything that gets a person moving, such as walking to the mailbox. Exercise is moving at a pace that increases your heart rate, such as walking around the block. Walk Kansas promotes both physical activity and exercise. The minutes you report are only those that qualify as exercise.

It is important to move throughout your day, and especially important that you move — at least stand — for several minutes every waking hour. For the Walk Kansas program, however, we ask that you report only minutes of moderate and vigorous exercise that you do for at least 10 minutes at a time.

Moderate-intensity exercise — Walking or any activity you do at a pace where you can talk and carry on a conversation. If you can sing, you are not working hard enough. If you wear an activity tracker, moderate is about 100 steps per minute. Moderate exercise can include walking, biking, swimming, jogging, hiking, team sports, dancing, aerobic exercise, Zumba, gardening, and more.

Vigorous-intensity exercise — Any activity you do at a level where you are able to still talk but not carry on a conversation.

Set a Team Goal

Each Walk Kansas team will set a team goal (challenge) that requires each person to log 2 ½, 4, or 6 hours of exercise per week. Think about your personal goal and what you realistically accomplish each week as you discuss the team goal with your teammates.

Challenge 1 — Each participant reaches the minimum goal for physical activity — 2½ hours of moderate/vigorous (and strengthening) exercise per week. Collectively, the team would walk 423 miles during the 8-week program, which is the distance across the state of Kansas.

Challenge 2 — Take a winding trek diagonally across the state from Troy to Elkhart. Each person logs 4 hours of activity per week, which would take the team 750 miles.

Challenge 3 — Walk the perimeter of Kansas – 1200 miles – with each person logging 6 hours of moderate/vigorous activity per week.

What counts toward Walk Kansas minutes?

- Moderate/vigorous exercise and activity – at a level where you can carry on a conversation, but not sing (moderate), or where you can talk but not have a conversation (vigorous).
- Activity must be done for at least 10 consecutive minutes.
- Time you spend doing strengthening exercises.

If you wear an activity tracker (wrist tracker or pedometer), you can start counting steps after you reach 6,000 steps in a day. Report 15 minutes of activity for every 2,000 steps you take above 6,000.*

**Research tells us that most people will not get more than 6,000 steps in their average day. To be consistent with Walk Kansas goals, we ask you to count only the steps that would be above the amount you walk in an average day.*

My Goals for 2017

Helpful Information

Walk Kansas:

www.walkkansas.org

Physical Activity

Guidelines for Americans: <https://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/>

Strength Training

http://workshop.agrability.org/2011/Downloads/Vincent_07.pdf

“Don’t just sit there!”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/special/health/sitting/Sitting.pdf>

“MyPlate” United States Department of Agriculture:

www.choosemyplate.gov

You will also find the “SuperTracker” here, which can help you plan, analyze and track your diet and physical activity.

<https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspx>