

Measure Your Progress

Evaluating progress is an important step in moving you toward your goals. A re-evaluation every few weeks will help you stay on track, and your success is the best motivator! Here are several suggestions for evaluating your progress.

Take the Walking Test

You can do this test yourself and use it as a tool to judge your progress over time. **Do the test the first week** of Walk Kansas so you can see your progress. You will need a watch with a second hand.

Find a walking course that takes you 4 to 6 minutes to complete. It does not have to be flat and you do not need to know the distance. Just make sure you use the same course each time you do the test. You should walk the course at a comfortable speed – a pace where you can just barely carry on a conversation with someone.

To take the test:

- Walk the course. Time how long it takes you to cover the course to the nearest second. Take your pulse for 10 seconds immediately after finishing the walk and multiply this number by six to obtain the beats per minute. Record how long it took you to complete the course and your heart rate immediately after the walk.

- Repeat the test exactly the same way at week 4 and week 7 of Walk Kansas. If you are consistently increasing your physical activity you will see some changes. Your time for the same distance should be lower or your heart rate should be lower immediately after the walk. Both of these changes may occur.

Journaling

Journaling goes beyond the daily log that you are asked to keep for Walk Kansas. This activity can help you learn more about yourself and the specific challenges or barriers you face.

You might decide to record your mood each day and how you feel about the changes you are trying to make. How do you feel if you are active each day? How do you feel if you choose a piece of fruit over a candy bar as a snack? This is just a starting point.

You may also decide to journal your sleep habits and how you perceive you are handling stress. How is regular physical activity and better food choices impacting your quality sleep, or your stress level?

Set Short and Long Term Goals

Typically, short term goals are those you can accomplish in less than 3 months. Long term goals are set for a 3 month period or longer.

When you establish your S.M.A.R.T. goals, first think of the long term goals you want to accomplish and write those down. Then, set short term goals that are reasonable and achievable that get you started toward your long term goals. Identify rewards that are appropriate for each. Non-food rewards are best and the reward for your long term goal should be something you really want to work for.