



Walk Kansas

a fitness challenge

K-State Research and Extension

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**Kansas State University
Walk Kansas**

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Every Move Matters

Do you spend a good part of your day sitting? Most adults spend half the waking day sitting behind a desk, in front of a computer, or behind the wheel. While sitting is not a bad thing in itself, prolonged sitting can be a health risk.

Walk Kansas encourages participants to be active and to get a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity at least five days a week. If you meet these guidelines, does it matter what you do during the rest of the time? New evidence suggests that prolonged sitting is not good — even for those who are otherwise very active.

The good news: Standing or walking for even a few minutes every hour has health benefits. Though it's not long enough to log as Walk Kansas activity, it pays great health dividends.

Deb Sellers (pictured at right) had become a master at sitting. Sellers is an assistant professor and specialist in adult development and aging at Kansas State University. With eight hours devoted to research and outreach, and two hours commuting each day, she was sitting much more than she wanted to be, and she didn't like it.



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Every Move Matters

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Now, visitors might hear light footsteps when they pass her office. Her standing desk and treadmill motivate her to walk at least an hour each workday while taking care of email or reading. After learning about treadmill desks on the [Mayo Clinic](#) website, Sellers and her husband built the customized desk so she could integrate physical movement with work.

There are easy ways to weave a few minutes of activity into each hour and break up time spent sitting. Here are a few ideas to try, but think creatively and add a few of your own.

- Stand while talking on the phone.
- Park further from your workplace or the grocery store.
- Take a 3-minute movement break every hour. Need a reminder? Set a timer on your computer or clock.
- Stand a few minutes an hour. Swing your arms and stretch.
- Deliver messages in person, rather than by email.
- Keep a resistance band nearby and use it to exercise.
- Use a standing desk for part of the day.
- Trade your office chair for a fitness ball.
- Use the restroom on another floor and take the stairs.
- Watching TV? Get up and move during every commercial.

It really isn't difficult to integrate a few minutes of movement into each hour of the day. Sometimes all we need is a simple reminder to do it.

2010 Success Story

When I began this program I was out of shape. I've been heavy most of my life and am the typical yo-yo dieter. After turning 40 it was difficult to lose weight. I was determined to be successful this time and make positive changes.

I started out barely able to walk 30 minutes and not eating healthy. During these past eight weeks I have changed what I eat. I'm eating less and feeling satisfied. I'm walking six days a week and am amazed how much better I feel. Each week was a little easier, and I walked further. My husband joined me several weeks into the program and now we walk 45 to 50 minutes almost every day. I have lost 17 pounds and feel this program helped me establish the foundation for what I hope will be a lifelong change. It was a very positive experience.

– Lisa Duerksen, Harvey County

Consider More Strengthening Options

You can feel a difference when your body is stronger, and that difference contributes to a more positive outlook as well as better sleep. Free weights and body weight exercises are easy, inexpensive ways to improve muscle strength.

- Free weights or dumbbells. These are classic tools used to strengthen the upper body. They are available in various sizes. Start with 2-, 3-, or 5-pound weights and gradually increase. Or, make weights using items you have at home. Milk jugs filled with water or sand will

work. Secure the tops with duct tape and weigh the jug on a household scale. Adjust the weight as your fitness level changes. Canned food products can serve as hand weights, so pull something the appropriate weight from your cupboard.

- Body weight exercises. These require little or no equipment since they use your body weight for resistance. Try push-ups, pull-ups, abdominal crunches, and leg squats.

You can achieve better balance by strengthening abdominal muscles, also called "core"

muscles. Engage core muscles by incorporating an unstable surface into activities.

Start with something simple: Balance on one foot, then the other, while brushing your teeth. Adjusting to an unstable surface forces you to engage abdominal muscles. Another simple exercise uses a stability ball. Sit on the ball and raise your right arm and left knee; hold for 12 seconds. Do the same with your left arm and right knee.

Video demonstrations of strengthening options can be seen at www.walkkansas.org.

Choose Low-Fat Milk Products

Dairy foods are some of the most affordable sources of nutrition and are widely available, so they can be consumed every day.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, recommends higher consumption of low-fat milk and milk products. The nutrients associated with these foods include calcium and vitamin D. While calcium is found in fortified foods and plant foods, consuming enough of them to get the recommended amount is unrealistic for many people.

Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products — such as milk, yogurt, cheese, or fortified soy beverages — deliver nine essential nutrients including calcium; potassium; phosphorous; protein; vitamins D, A, and B12; riboflavin; and niacin. Milk, cheese, and yogurt combined contribute more than half the calcium and nearly 60 percent of the vitamin D available in the food supply.

Why do the guidelines recommend eating more of these foods? On average, most Americans consume

two servings of dairy products a day. The recommendation for those 9 years and older is three daily servings. The dietary guidelines also emphasize a total diet approach, urging people to reduce calories and watch portion sizes. Calories and fat can be reduced significantly by choosing nonfat and low-fat dairy foods. Switching from whole milk can be done gradually by successively choosing products lower in fat over a period of time. Cheese is often high in fat, so watch portion sizes.

Yogurt is available in nonfat and low-fat varieties; however, the sugar content is often significant in flavored yogurt. You can make your own vanilla nonfat yogurt instead of using the commercial variety. Making your own reduces the fat by almost 1 teaspoon and the sugar by almost 3 teaspoons.

Start with 1 cup nonfat plain yogurt. Add 2 teaspoons granulated sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Mix. Add berries, peaches, or bananas, and top with nuts or a spoonful of whole-grain cereal for a tasty treat loaded with nutrients.

Banana Cream Smoothie

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients

1 cup sliced ripe banana (about 1 large)	½ cup nonfat milk
1 cup nonfat plain yogurt	2 tablespoons graham cracker crumbs
1 teaspoon sugar	1 tablespoon nonfat dry milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	3 ice cubes

Directions

- 1) Arrange banana slices in a single layer on a baking sheet. Freeze until firm — about 1 hour.
- 2) Place frozen banana and remaining ingredients in a blender and process until smooth. Sprinkle with a few more graham cracker crumbs, if desired, and serve immediately.

Freeze and store extra bananas in plastic “zipper” bags so you can make this smoothie in a flash.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories – 180; fat – 1g; carbohydrate – 37 g; fiber – 2 g; sodium – 135 mg.

