

Walk Kansas

celebrate healthy living

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In This Issue

Are You Sitting Too Much?
What Not to Wear While Walking
Breakfast — The Best Way to Start Your Day
Recipe: Banana Oatmeal

Coming Next Week

Are You House Walking?
Take 10 for Better Health
Vary Your Protein
Recipe: Beef and Quinoa Meatballs

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Are You Sitting Too Much?

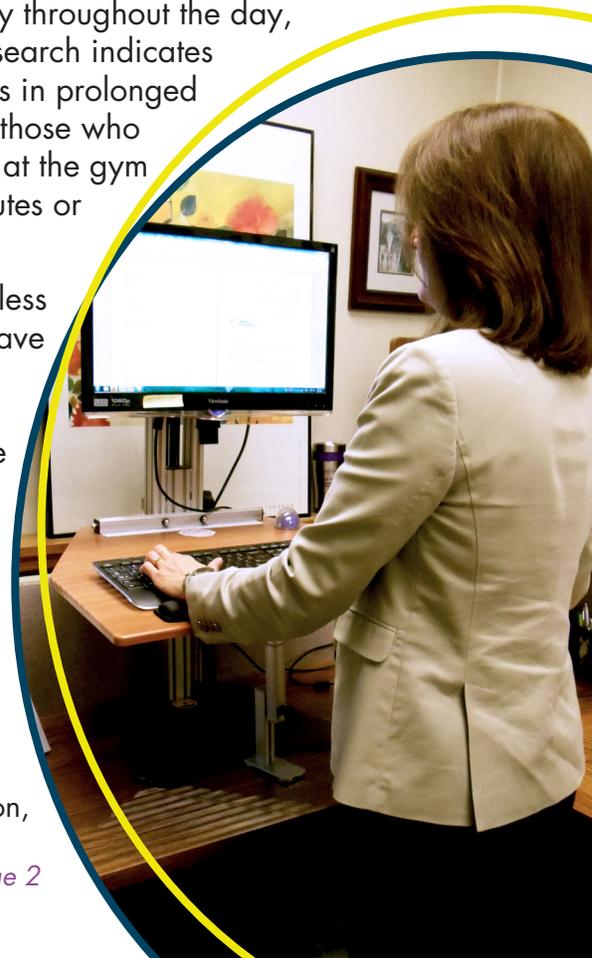
Do you spend a good part of your day sitting? Most adults spend half their waking day sitting behind a desk, in front of a computer or the television, behind the wheel, or riding in a car. While sitting is not a bad thing in itself, prolonged sitting is linked to increased risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer. It also can cause back and shoulder pain.

When you sit, the processes in your body that break down fats and sugars seem to stall. When you stand or move, the muscle activity required triggers these processes back into action. Any kind of movement, regularly throughout the day, can make a difference. Research indicates that everyone who engages in prolonged sitting can be at risk, even those who spend a few hours a week at the gym or walk vigorously 30 minutes or more each day.

The message is simple. Sit less and stand whenever you have the chance, and if you can move a little every hour, that is even better. Pick one of these ideas to try this week or create your own strategy.

- Stand when the phone rings or whenever you talk on the phone.
- Use a standing desk for part of the day.
- Deliver messages in person, rather than by email.

continued on page 2



Are You Sitting Too Much?

continued from page 1

- Use the restroom on another floor of your office building or home, and take the stairs.
- Move the printer away from your desk so you need to stand or walk to retrieve copies.
- Take meetings out of the conference room — talk while you walk.
- Stand for webinars and conference calls.
- Trade your office chair for a stability ball.
- When you watch television, stand and move during every commercial.
- In charge of a meeting or conference? Plan a standing break every hour.
- At the very least, pay attention to the amount of time you spend sitting each day. Then, make small changes to start breaking the pattern.

Posture while sitting and standing is also important. The human body was not designed to spend all day hunched over a dimly lit screen or with a phone held to the ear. If you are not mindful about the way you sit and stand, poor posture can easily become second nature. Be sure to keep your body in alignment when sitting and standing; use posture-friendly props and office chairs when sitting; exercise and move regularly to prevent injury and promote good posture; and pay attention to the signals your body gives you.

Success Stories from 2012

"I became more aware of the effects of prolonged sitting and how it affects my back pain. It became very clear to me that when I moved more, I hurt less. I am more aware of my sitting posture."

Leavenworth County

Choose "Soda-briety"

"I gave up sodas completely! I just drink water now and lost 4 pounds by doing that."

Geary County

People often don't realize how many calories sugar-sweetened beverages add to the diet. A 20-ounce bottle of soda contains 250 empty calories. Drinking one or more of these each day contributes to unintended weight gain and increases your risk for developing Type 2 diabetes.

Make it your goal to drink more water than sugar-sweetened beverages. If you choose a sweetened beverage, opt for a small size (12 ounces or less.) A 12-ounce soda, instead of 20-ounce, saves 110 calories. Sparkling water with lemon instead of a sweetened iced tea from the vending machine saves 180 calories.

What Not to Wear While Walking

Everyone makes mistakes and learns the hard way sometimes. Here are a few walking gear hints about what not to wear while walking.

Hand and ankle weights.

Most medical experts will advise against wearing weights on your hands and ankles during fitness walking. These are not natural and will likely cause strain. Weights are best used for simple strengthening exercises before or after you walk.

Cotton tube socks. These are not a good choice for walking because the cotton fiber holds sweat next to your skin. This allows blisters to form more quickly.

Choose a sock made from sweat-wicking fabric. Since your foot is not shaped like a tube, this type of sock will not stay in place at your toe and heel. Choose something that is anatomically designed for the best result.

All dark or camouflage clothing.

Make sure that people driving cars and bikes have a chance to see you, especially after dark. Select lighter colors and reflective stripes. Camouflage clothing and similar colors can make seeing you difficult even in daytime. Practice safe walking etiquette by walking on the left side of the road facing traffic, single file.

Flip flops. Flip flops don't provide support and you will tend to shuffle rather than walk. Save these for other types of summer fun. If you like the feel of a sandal, go for a hiking sandal instead.

Purse or large backpack. If you have enough pockets, you might not even need a pack to carry walking essentials. Avoid purses or anything that places the load on just one shoulder. The only essentials you need include identification, a spare house key, your cellphone, and water. If you are carrying more than a pound, waist packs and backpacks with belly straps are your best option.

The Best Way to Start Your Day

Eating breakfast every day is an investment in good health. Literally, breakfast means “break the fast.” Your body needs fuel for your muscles and brain to function efficiently. A healthful breakfast keeps hunger at bay, helps you stay focused, and increases your odds of meeting recommended values for vitamins and minerals.

Even though you know and understand the value of eating breakfast each day, you may still find yourself rushed in the morning and dash out the door without anything to eat. When pressed for time, you may not make the best choices or have to settle for fast food. The key to having a healthful breakfast each day is to plan ahead. Here are some tips.

Keep healthy choices on hand.

Make sure you have healthful breakfast items at home that are quick and easy, such as string cheese, whole-grain bread or English muffins, whole-grain cereal and fat-free milk, hard-boiled eggs, and individual cartons of low-fat yogurt. You can cook oatmeal ahead of time and keep it in the refrigerator so all it needs is a quick warm-up in the microwave oven. Steel-cut oats contain more fiber than rolled oats or instant varieties, but any type of oatmeal is a good choice. Add dried or fresh fruit, nuts, and milk. Bananas are nature’s fast food and one of the easiest to eat on the go.

Focus on lean protein.

Protein helps keep blood sugar (glucose) steady. You’ll feel satisfied longer because your body digests it at a slower rate than carbohydrates. Good choices include yogurt, low-fat cheese and milk, eggs, soy, turkey sausage, and peanut butter.

Include fiber-rich carbohydrates.

Choose whole-grain breads and cereals with at least 4 grams of fiber per serving.

Have fruit instead of juice. If you routinely miss breakfast, keep fruit and breakfast bars at work. When choosing a breakfast bar, go for at least 4 grams of fiber per bar; no more than 1 gram of saturated fat or 5 grams of sugar per 100 calories; and make sure whole grains are the first item in the ingredient list.

Link of the Week



If you need a nudge to get out of your chair every hour, consider downloading a free app to your computer or phone that will prompt you to move every 60 minutes. One example is Workrave.

www.workrave.org

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Banana Oatmeal

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 ¼ cups skim milk
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/8 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- ½ cup oatmeal (not instant)
- 1 pinch allspice or cinnamon
- 1 small banana (cut 4 slices, cut rest into small pieces)
- 1 tablespoon chopped walnuts



Directions:

1. Bring milk, salt, vanilla, and brown sugar to a boil.
2. Add oats and allspice.
3. Reduce to medium and cook for 5 minutes.
4. Add small banana pieces and turn off heat; let set for 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Place oatmeal into 2 bowls; top each with 2 banana slices and half the walnuts; serve.

Nutrition information for one

serving: 206 calories; 4 g fat; 35 g carbohydrates; 3.5 g fiber; 81 mg sodium.