



# Walk Kansas

*a fitness challenge*

K-State Research and Extension

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## *Walk Kansas 2011*

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## *A Personal Gift*

Kansas residents have the opportunity to enjoy seasonal weather changes. While landscape colors are particularly beautiful this time of year, the transition to cold temperatures and fewer daylight hours can pose challenges for anyone who likes to be active outdoors. Add the "holiday hustle" and it is easy to understand why people are less active from November to January.

As the holiday season approaches, take some time to plan how you will maintain the healthy lifestyle changes you have made throughout the winter months. Think of time you devote to these healthy lifestyle practices as a "personal gift." Here are suggestions to consider.

### **Put exercise and healthy eating into perspective.**

Physical activity is important and so is spending time with family and friends. To get the most out of your holiday season and celebrations, balance social activities with self-care. If you can't carve 30 minutes out of your schedule for physical activity, try for a 10-minute walk in the morning and another later in the day. Any physical activity is better than none at all. If you have lost weight during the past year, adjust your expectation to weight maintenance for the next several

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## A Personal Gift

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months. The holiday season is not a good time to work toward weight loss goals. Good self-care also includes getting adequate rest. You can be more productive and will enjoy holiday activities more if you get enough sleep.

**Alter your schedule.** If possible, schedule physical activity first thing in the morning. An evening workout or walk can be easy to ignore if you have holiday parties and family events scheduled.

### Weave exercise into your holiday activities.

Time you spend with family and friends can include physical activity. Organize a caroling party or enjoy a brisk evening walk through festive neighborhoods with holiday lights. If you are headed to a mall, walk briskly for 10 minutes before you start shopping.

### Use physical activity to deal with stress and improve your mood.

Holidays are stressful, and even happy occasions can be tense at times. A good way to relieve stress and refocus is by taking a brisk walk or an exercise/stretch break. If you are traveling, take advantage of the opportunity to walk in airports or stop regularly if traveling by car. If you have pain from a chronic health condition, remember that exercise can help manage these symptoms.

### Return to your routine after the holidays are over.

Perhaps this is the most important thing to remember. Setbacks are normal when you make lifestyle changes, and the best thing you can do is plan for them. Plan for how you will get back on track as soon as possible.

## Time for Pumpkin and Winter Squash

While pumpkins decorate homes this time of year, cooked pumpkin is a delicious and nutritious food that needs to make its way to your dinner table. Pumpkins belong to the squash family and can easily be substituted for winter squash or sweet potatoes in most recipes.

A half-cup of canned pumpkin has just 40 calories, is low in fat, and adds 3 grams of fiber to your diet. You also get more than three times the daily recommendation for

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## 2010 Success Story

When we started Walk Kansas I was having terrific hip pain and could hardly stand, let alone walk very far. I started with 10 to 15 minutes of walking, and by the time we finished I had met my goal of walking 30 minutes each day and doing physical therapy workouts. I'm feeling better now than I have in years. I'm exercising more than I ever thought possible and can almost get into the next size smaller jeans. Thank you for presenting Walk Kansas. I am looking forward to doing this again next year. To everyone who participated in the program, I would like to say "way to go!"

– 2010 Walk Kansas Participant

## Should I Exercise if I Feel Sick?

If you feel sick, your body is telling you that something is wrong. Mild to moderate physical activity is generally all right if you have symptoms of a cold but no fever. If you have nasal congestion or suffer from low energy, exercise will often help you feel better. Gentle exercise is often better than an afternoon on the couch. You are the best judge of what your body can handle when

you're sick. A rule of thumb to remember for exercise and illness:

- If your symptoms are "above the neck," such as a runny nose, nasal congestion, sneezing, sore throat — go ahead and exercise. You may need to lower the intensity level of physical activity depending on how you feel.
- If symptoms are "below the neck," including an upset

stomach, chest congestion or a hacking cough, it is best to postpone physical activity. Don't exercise if you experience fatigue, body aches, or have a fever. Your heart is already beating faster because of the higher body temperature and exercise will be too stressful.

Again, you are the best judge of how you feel. If exercise makes any symptoms worse, rest is the best choice.

## Time for Pumpkin and Winter Squash

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vitamin A in the form of beta carotene. Pumpkin is also a good source of vitamin C, potassium, iron, and the phytochemical family of carotenoids — particularly lutein, which has been shown to lower the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration. When purchasing canned pumpkin, choose the salt-free version.

While canned pumpkin is the most convenient, you can make your own pumpkin puree. The canned version is cooked longer to reduce moisture so the texture is more dense. Here are a few ideas to get you started using pumpkin puree and varieties of winter squash.

- Use pumpkin or sweet potatoes instead of mashed potatoes in a shepherd's pie.
- Add a can of pumpkin to a pot of chili. Pumpkin helps thicken the chili and the pumpkin flavor blends in with chili spices.
- Substitute spaghetti squash for pasta.
- Use pumpkin in muffins. Substitute whole-wheat flour for a portion of all-purpose flour, and use unsweetened applesauce to replace some of the oil.

### Did You Know?

Canned pumpkin and canned pumpkin pie filling are not the same. Canned pumpkin is a pumpkin puree that contains only pumpkin or squash with low salt. Pumpkin pie filling contains added sugar and spices such as allspice, nutmeg, and cinnamon. It has almost three times the calories of pumpkin puree.

## Pumpkin Apple Muffins

Makes 12 Muffins

1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour	½ cup refrigerated egg product, or 2 eggs (slightly beaten)
½ cup whole-wheat flour	1 cup canned pumpkin
1 teaspoon cinnamon	¾ cup buttermilk or sour milk*
½ teaspoon ground ginger	¼ cup unsweetened applesauce
¼ teaspoon ground cloves	¼ cup packed brown sugar
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder	2 tablespoons cooking oil
½ teaspoon salt	
¼ teaspoon baking soda	

### Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 375° F. Lightly coat 12 muffin cups with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
- 2) In a large bowl, stir together all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, spices, baking powder, salt, and baking soda; set aside.
- 3) In a medium bowl, combine egg, pumpkin, buttermilk, applesauce, brown sugar, and oil. Add pumpkin mixture all at once to flour mixture and stir until just moistened.
- 4) Divide batter evenly among prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. Bake 25 minutes or until golden brown and a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean.
- 5) Cool in muffin cups on wire rack for 5 minutes. Remove muffins from pan and serve.

\* To make ¾ cup sour milk, place 2 ¼ teaspoons lemon juice or vinegar in a glass measuring cup. Add enough milk to make ¾ cup total liquid and stir. Let mixture stand for 5 minutes before using.

**Nutrition information per muffin:** Calories – 127; fat – 3g; carbohydrate – 22 g; sodium – 19 mg; fiber – 2 g

