



# Walk Kansas

a fitness challenge

K-State Research and Extension

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## Calendar

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## Mix it Up: Avoid Exercise Boredom

We are just past the halfway point of Walk Kansas. Are you starting to tire of your daily physical fitness routine? If you are, it may be time to mix it up. Give one of these ideas a try.

**Quick fix:** Make a simple adjustment to your current or favorite activity. If you are walking on a treadmill, take your walk outside several days a week. Listen to different music while you walk, change your route or find a nearby walking trail.

**Walk backward:** That's right! Challenge yourself a little more by incorporating backward walking or running. Backward movement can help improve balance, and it uses muscles differently, making your legs stronger – especially your quads. You can also increase the length of your stride, since you tend to reach farther back with each step, translating to longer strides when you switch back to walking forward. Backward walking also puts less pressure on the knee joint. Start slowly and add a 1-minute interval of backward movement a couple of times during your walk. Slow your pace until you feel comfortable with the movement – and to avoid potholes, signs, dogs, cars and other hazards. Alternate looking over your left and right shoulders to prevent neck pain.

**Go retro:** Beat exercise boredom with a workout that is fun

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## Mix it Up: Avoid Exercise Boredom

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and funny. Check out old videos and rock out '80s style. You'll burn calories and laugh your socks off!

**Try tai chi:** This is a noncompetitive, self-paced form of gentle physical exercise and stretching. It includes performing a series of postures and movements in a slow, graceful manner. Different forms of tai chi offer a faster pace.

Most people can practice tai chi. It is a low-impact movement especially suitable for older adults and people who have arthritis. It can be done indoors or out, and with a group or alone – but seek guidance from a qualified instructor to start. Many communities offer classes. Once you learn basic movements you can practice on your own, though people often enjoy the social element of a group session. You can also check out books and videos about tai chi.

- **Jazz it up with Zumba Fitness:** Add some Latin flavor and international zest to your workout. Zumba fitness keeps everyone motivated by creating a party-like atmosphere. While Zumba incorporates dance steps, you don't need to be a dancer.

- Elsa Toburen, Manhattan, Kan., a certified Zumba instructor, says, "Don't worry about how you look ... feel the music and enjoy yourself."

- Zumba works bicep curls, knee lifts and squats into the movement, along with Latin dance steps. The goal is to laugh and let loose!

- "Students are always smiling during Zumba classes," Toburen says.

- To learn more and to search for an instructor near you, go to [www.zumba.com](http://www.zumba.com)

## Vegetable Gardening on a Budget

Growing your own vegetables is a great way to have easy access to fresh produce, save money on your grocery bills and have fun while getting some outdoor physical activity. Here are a few ways to grow some veggies without breaking your household budget:

- Plant seeds rather than buying more expensive transplants. For just a few dollars you can buy several packets of vegetable seeds. Lettuce, spinach, radishes, peas, green beans, squash, cucumbers, cantaloupe and watermelon are just some of the garden plants that can be started easily from seeds.
- Buy smaller plants. If you need to buy transplants, those sold in 4-packs or 6-packs are more economical than bigger plants usually sold in individual 4- or 6-inch pots.
- Start small. You don't need fancy power equipment to plant a garden. If you don't have a way to till a large area, plant some vegetables and herbs in a *container garden*. If your yard space is limited, interplant vegetables and herbs with flowers in existing garden beds.
- Make your own *compost*. Compost adds nutrients and organic matter to your soil. It also keeps all those extra leaves, grass clippings and kitchen waste out of the landfill.
- Look for sales on garden tools. Garage sales are a good place to find used tools. Start with the basics, such as a shovel, hoe, rake, garden trowel and watering hose.
- Get free gardening advice. Publication MF315, the "*Vegetable Garden Planting Guide*" is a good resource for information on gardening in Kansas. You can download it at the link or ask for a copy at *your local K-State Research and Extension office*. That local office is also a great place to discuss your gardening questions with an agent or a volunteer with Extension Master Gardeners.

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# Breakfast Basics

Eating breakfast every day is an investment in good health. Literally, breakfast means “break the fast.” Your body needs fuel for 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.

A recent study in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* found that individuals who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight – and more likely to exercise – than breakfast skippers. Following are some breakfast tips.

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

**Include fiber-rich carbohydrates.** Choose whole-grain breads or cereals with at least 4 grams of fiber per serving. Have fruit instead of juice. Fiber-rich carbohydrates, rather than a high-fat breakfast, may improve mental focus, according to research published in the *International Journal of Food and Science Nutrition*.

**Be prepared.** Grab string cheese, whole-wheat crackers and a piece of fruit; spread peanut butter on a whole-grain English muffin; or keep hard-boiled eggs and individual cartons of low-fat yogurt in the refrigerator for busy mornings. Other choices: oatmeal with skim milk, dried fruit and nuts; a bran muffin, low-fat cheese, fruit and milk; homemade smoothie with fruit and low-fat vanilla yogurt; or low-fat cottage cheese with fruit and a slice of raisin bread. Don’t forget one of the easiest breakfast items – a bowl of low-sugar cereal with skim milk and fruit.

## Did you know?

*Eating cereal is one of the healthiest ways to start your day, so choose wisely.*

*Look for whole grain to be listed first in the ingredient list. Choose a cereal that contains 100 to 200 calories per serving (ideally around 120 calories) and less than 8 grams of sugar. Aim for 5 or more grams of fiber, and look for a range of 10 to 25 percent of daily value for key vitamins and minerals such as iron, folate, B6 and B12.*

## Grab and Go Breakfast Bars

Makes 18 Servings

### Ingredients:

1½ cups flour	¾ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon salt	1 egg
¾ teaspoon baking soda	3 medium bananas, mashed
½ teaspoon nutmeg	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon cinnamon	1½ cups raw, quick-cooking oats
¼ cup margarine	⅓ cup slivered almonds
¼ cup applesauce	⅓ cup dried cranberries

### Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 425° F. Grease and flour a 13- by 9-inch baking pan.
- 2) In medium bowl, stir together flour, salt, baking soda and spices. Set aside.
- 3) In large bowl, beat margarine, applesauce, sugar and egg until light and fluffy. Add bananas and vanilla; beat until smooth.
- 4) Gradually stir in flour mixture and oats until well combined. Stir in almonds and cranberries.
- 5) Place mixture in prepared pan and bake until golden, approximately 25 minutes. Let bars cool, cut into 18 servings, wrap individually and freeze, if desired.

### Nutrition Information per Serving:

Calories – 150; Fat – 4.5g; Carbohydrate – 25g; Fiber – 2g; Protein – 3g; Sodium – 190mg

