

Walk Kansas

celebrate healthy living

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Boost Intensity with Interval Training

People of all ages and fitness levels can benefit from interval training, which is simply alternating short bursts of intense activity with lighter activity. In fact, interval training can be better for overall health than slow, sustained exercise. Life is like interval training. You work and then you rest, and so on.

You can include interval training in your physical activity routine at many levels, and it doesn't require special equipment. The key is to start at a level that is right for you and build from there. If walking is the activity you prefer, alternate with bursts of jogging, or walk at a more leisurely pace and then very briskly — depending on your current fitness level. If walking on a treadmill, leave the speed the same, and increase the grade for short amounts of time — 30 seconds to 2 minutes and back down again.

Interval training can jazz up your activity routine and keep it interesting and fresh. The more vigorous the activity, the more calories you burn, so it makes sense that interval training aids in weight

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Boost Intensity with Interval Training

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loss. Another benefit is improved cardiovascular fitness, which will allow you to cover a specific distance in less time.

While most people can include interval training safely, it isn't appropriate for everyone. If you haven't been exercising regularly or have a chronic health condition, be sure to check with your physician before adding any type of interval training. As with any activity, you should begin with a 5-minute warm-up, such as walking at a slower pace and light stretching. Add just one or two intense activity bursts at first. Listen to cues your body gives you to avoid injuries and sore muscles. Challenge yourself more as your stamina improves and always include cool-down time at the end of any activity.

Success Stories from 2012

"I did blood work in December and then again during week 7 of Walk Kansas. My triglyceride levels decreased dramatically along with cholesterol levels. The numbers are close to the range they need to be in, so I am going to continue to track my minutes and fruits/vegetables every week and hope to see even more improvement by October. "

— Douglas County

Medicine Balls and More

A medicine ball is a weighted ball used in strength training and rehabilitation to help people recover from or prevent injuries. It is an excellent tool to use for building core strength. Your core includes muscles in your abdomen and lower back. Performing exercises with a medicine ball is also a good way to warm up your arms and shoulders and get your heart rate up.

It is important to use a medicine ball that is the appropriate size for you. Medicine balls range in size from 1 to more than 30 pounds and many people use a heavier ball than needed. Generally, the medicine ball should be heavy enough to slow the motion but not so

heavy that you lose control by the end of your exercise routine. A good resource for strength training with medicine balls, including a sample exercise routine, is: http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/pdf/FSFCS37.pdf

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends including strength training exercises at least two days per week. These exercises build muscle, and increased strength helps you perform daily activities easily. Strengthening also helps increase your metabolism, helping you to maintain a healthy weight and normal blood-sugar levels.

Learn to Acquire a Taste for Water

If you are used to the taste of sweet drinks, you may need to acquire a taste for water.

Try water from a different source. Not all water tastes the same. If tap water where you live or work does not taste good to you, try filtered water or spring water.

What temperature of water tastes best to you? Some people find it helps to drink water that is slightly warmer during the cooler months, and ice-cold water may taste better when it is warm outside.

Change the taste. Add fruit or mint leaves to water for a refreshing taste.

Always keep water close by. Carry water with you when you travel and have it handy at work and home. All bottled water comes from a municipal water supply, so save money by refilling your own bottle with tap water, washing it thoroughly on a regular basis. The more often you choose water over other liquids, the better it will taste to you.

Drink only water for a while. If you drink super-sweet beverages (sweetened with sugar or sugar substitute) most of the time, it is hard for water to compete. Your affinity for sweetness will decrease if you expose yourself to less of it. Think of sweet beverages as "candy drinks" and enjoy them occasionally. If you avoid these for a while, you might find that "candy drinks" are just too sweet for you!

Rethink Acts of Kindness

Giving food to others is a way of expressing love and kindness, and food plays a key role in many celebrations. It is natural to use food as a way to bring people together.

Because of cost and convenience, the food shared with neighbors, friends, co-workers, and during celebrations is often a grain dessert (cakes, cookies, donuts, etc.) or candy. If it is sweet, or sweet and high-fat, the treat seems special. The problem is that most people get plenty of sweet or high-fat treats, known as “empty calorie” foods, on a regular basis.

In the United States, adults get almost 15 percent of their calories (about 320) from added sugars, while children and teens get about 18 percent of their calories from added sugars. When you look at empty calorie foods, those high in solid fats and/or sugar, nearly 40 percent of the calories children and teens eat fall into this category. This means about 798 calories each day come from low-nutrient foods — at least twice the amount recommended by the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010*.

To change this trend, learn to view food treats in a different way. If you care about the people you work with, do you really want to take leftover holiday candy to the office? Here are a few ideas to rethink acts of kindness:

- 1. Make it healthful.** Fresh fruit really is a treat! When baking, use whole-grain ingredients, and reduce the fat and sugar whenever possible.
- 2. Offer smaller portions.** Cut brownies into half the size you usually do. Offer a brownie bite with fruit.
- 3. Take a vote.** Decide as a group how often empty calorie treats can be shared. Two days a week? Only on Fridays?
- 4. Freeze leftover candy and goodies.** This can help you avoid overdoing it with empty calorie foods. Use a chocolate candy later by adding small chunks to homemade granola bars or oatmeal cookies.
- 5. Stuff it for later.** Use leftover Halloween and Easter candy to fill a piñata and crack it open during the next holiday or for your child’s birthday.
- 6. Decorate a house.** Halloween candy can be used to decorate a gingerbread house.
- 7. Choose beverages carefully.** The top single category of empty calories in the diet is sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda, fruit drinks, energy drinks, and sports drinks.

Berry Crisp

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 4 cups fresh blueberries*
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon corn starch
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- ¼ cup flour (all purpose or whole wheat)
- ¼ cup uncooked oats
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons margarine

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

2. In a bowl, combine blueberries, sugar, corn starch, and lemon juice. Pour into a lightly buttered baking dish.
3. In the same bowl, combine flour, oats, cinnamon, nutmeg, and brown sugar. Add margarine and mix till crumbly.
4. Spread mixture over berries and bake for 35 to 40 minutes.

Note: To make 3 servings of this recipe, cut the ingredients in half and bake in a loaf pan.

Nutrition information for one serving: 201 calories; 4.5 g fat; 42 g carbohydrates; 3 g fiber; 40 mg sodium.

*This recipe works well with other fresh or canned fruits, including other berries, cherries, pears, peaches, or apples.

