

Walk Kansas

celebrate healthy living

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In This Issue

Walk This Way
Sitting Is the New Smoking
Carbohydrates for Energy
Recipe: Mediterranean Bean Soup

Coming Next Week

Climb Toward Better Health
Power Forward with Your Arms
What Is Your Healthy?
Quinoa — the Mother Grain
Recipe: Quinoa Tabbouleh

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Walk This Way

How does walking differ from slow running? Pace is not what differentiates the two. Race walkers can easily move past recreational joggers. Walkers have one foot on the ground at all times, while runners are entirely airborne during a part of every stride.

Running is a high-impact activity; walking is not. Each time runners land, they subject their bodies to stress equal to about three times their body weight. It is easy to understand why runners have a much higher risk of exercise-related injuries than walkers do.

This week, improve your walking technique and use your arms to power forward and increase your pace. Pay attention to your posture. Picture this — you should be able to draw a straight line from your ear down to your shoulder, to your hip, knee, and ankle. Tighten your stomach muscles and tuck your pelvis under your torso.

When walking, move your shoulders naturally and freely, and avoid drawing your shoulders toward your ears. Swing your arms with each step, and bend arms at the elbow. Bending your arms will enable you to burn 5 to 10 percent more calories and increase your upper body strength. It will also reduce swell-

continued on page 2



Walk This Way

continued from page 1

ing, tingling, and numbness of the fingers or hands. Keep your hands relaxed and loosely closed. Pump your arms to increase your walking speed and to help you walk up hills.

Your stride should feel natural. Land on your heels and then roll forward to push off with your toes. Work at a level of intensity where you can just barely talk. If you can sing or easily carry on a conversation, you are not working hard enough. Pick up the pace or pump your arms more.

During any type of physical activity, watch for signs of overexertion. If you feel pain or pressure in your chest, abdomen, neck, jaw, or arms, stop exercising immediately and see your physician. Do the same if you experience nausea or vomiting, dizziness or fainting, extreme fatigue, excessive shortness of breath, or if your recovery from exercise is very slow. These are warning signs you should not ignore.

2013 Success Stories

As a result of this program I gained more knowledge about moving more often and how important it is to drink water.

— Sunflower District

This program really reminded me to break up long periods of sitting. Now I stop, especially if I am on a long drive.

— Seward County

Sitting Is the New Smoking

In 1964, the U.S. Surgeon General delivered a historic report on the dangers of tobacco, sparking a national movement that reduced smoking from 50 percent of adults at that time to less than 20 percent today. In December 2012, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin issued a Call to Action on Walking aimed at helping Americans improve their health by walking more. Physical inactivity has been identified as the major public health problem of our time. Health experts describe sitting as “the new smoking,” comparing the ill effects of inactivity to the side effects of smoking.

Most adults spend half of their waking day sitting behind a desk, in front of a computer or 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 can also cause back and shoulder pain, and is linked to poor circulation.

When you sit, the processes in your body that break down fats and sugars seem to stall. When you stand or move, muscle activity 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 solution seems simple. Sit less — stand and move more, a little every hour. Be aware of how much you sit during an average day. Sometimes an hour goes by quickly if you are working on a project, reading and responding to email, or chatting on Facebook.

How can you move a little every hour? Pick one of these ideas to try this week or create your own strategy.

- Stand whenever you talk on the phone.
- Use a standing desk.
- Move the printer and trash can away from your desk.
- Stand and move during every TV commercial.
- Plan standing breaks during meetings and conferences.
- Hold walking meetings when you can.

**** Earn Walk Kansas bonus minutes each week** if you break prolonged sitting (stand or move every hour) during your waking day. Do this six days of the week to earn 15 bonus minutes.

Carbohydrates for Energy

Carbohydrates are your body's preferred source of fuel, giving you almost instant energy. However, not all carbohydrates are equal. Healthful carbs are unprocessed and close to their natural state, while "bad" carbs are refined, processed carbohydrate foods. Most of their natural nutrients and fiber have been removed.

Carbs considered good for you are high in fiber, help you stay full longer, and are high in nutrients to promote health and prevent disease. They help you feel full without a lot of calories and have a low glycemic index, meaning they stabilize blood sugar levels. Good carb choices include whole vegetables and fruits, beans, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole-grain products.

Unfortunately, some of the most available carbs fall into the unhealthy category. Pastries, white breads, snack foods, french fries, pasta, candy, and soda fall into this category. Sometimes it is the added sauce or flavor that makes an otherwise healthful carb a poor choice. Movie popcorn is a good example because of the added fat and salt. These carbs are harmful because your body is not able to

process them very well.

By eating healthful carbs you will feel better, have more energy, and will have a better chance at achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

Eat more beans for good health.

Beans are a good source of carbohydrates and considered a "powerhouse food." They have a nutrient profile so strong and versatile that they are considered to be both a vegetable and a protein food. Beans are loaded with fiber to help you feel full longer, and they stabilize blood sugar. Another plus for beans is they cost only pennies per serving.

A variety of beans and legumes are available, and canned varieties make them a healthful fast food.

Use low- or no-sodium varieties of canned beans or rinse well before using; however, cooked dried beans are more flavorful and less mushy than their canned counterparts. You'll need to plan ahead to use dried beans because they can take up to two hours to cook. Cook beans in large batches and freeze in amounts equal to one can of beans, so they are easy to use. (1¾ cups of cooked dried beans equals a 15-ounce can.)

Mediterranean Bean Soup

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, coarsely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups dried beans, soaked according to package directions and drained (or 3 cans of beans, 15 ounces each, rinsed well)
- 8 cups boiling water
- 1 14-ounce can stewed tomatoes in juice
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 teaspoons chicken bouillon granules
- 1 tablespoon fresh or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley; additional for garnish
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Heat olive oil in heavy 3-quart stockpot; sauté onion, carrots, celery, and garlic until vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes.
2. Add drained beans, boiling water, and bay leaves to stockpot and cook over low heat for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
3. Add stewed tomatoes in their juice, tomato paste, bouillon, thyme, and parsley. Cook until beans are soft (an additional 30 to 90 minutes. Cooking time varies with age of beans.)
4. Add salt and pepper to taste. For thicker soup, remove about 1½ cups of beans and puree in food processor or blender; return to pot.
5. Serve and garnish individual bowls with more chopped parsley.

Nutrition Information per serving

(with dried beans): 210 calories; 4.5 g fat; 35 g carbohydrates; 9 g protein; 12 g fiber; 370 mg sodium

Nutrition Information per serving

(with canned beans): 260 calories; 4.5 g fat; 44 g carbohydrates; 13 g protein; 11 g fiber; 1080 mg sodium.

