

Walk Kansas

celebrate healthy living

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What Is Your Exercise Personality?

With only two weeks remaining in Walk Kansas 2014, it is time for you to plan for how you will keep a walking or exercise routine going once the program is finished. How will you change or adapt your routine so you continue to challenge yourself and increase your stamina and strength? Your “exercise personality” could be a key to helping you stay motivated by finding activities you enjoy.

This quiz, from the American Institute for Cancer Research, can help you find your exercise style.

When I think about physical activity, I:

1. can't wait to put on my walking shoes.
2. really want to exercise, but need a push.
3. dread the idea of moving a muscle, but am happy once I get going.

When I am physically active, I enjoy exercising:

1. by myself at my own pace.
2. with a team or group.
3. with one or two buddies.

I exercise because:

1. I want to stay in shape, slim down, or improve my health.
2. I want to see my friends and catch up on the latest news.
3. the weather is nice or I just feel like it.



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What Is Your Exercise Personality?

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When I take part in a physical activity, I usually:

1. plan the event ahead of time.
2. participate when someone else has set up the activity or attend a class.
3. pull it together quickly and do something active when the mood strikes.

Others see me as:

1. a leader.
2. a team player.
3. someone who goes with a good idea.

I enjoy physical activities that are:

1. set by my own routine.
2. set by a professional, teacher, or group.
3. spontaneous.

Scoring — For every answer, give yourself:

1 = 1 point; 2 = 2 points; 3 = 3 points

If you scored 6 to 9 points, you are a self-motivator. You like structure and organization. Creating and sticking to your own exercise plan is relatively easy,

but you may find yourself losing interest in your usual routine. Try adding a few new activities such as biking, rowing, gardening, or hiking. Or try alternating your favorite workouts such as walking, swimming, and weightlifting on different days of the week.

If you scored 10 to 14 points, you are a team player. To you, exercise is a way to socialize and stay connected to friends and family. Group activities and classes are a natural selection for you. Sign up for an exercise class; put together a group of friends for walking; or join a team sport or sports league such as bowling, softball, or doubles tennis.

If you scored 15 to 18 points, you are spontaneous. You love freedom and loathe conforming to rigid rules. Things that get you moving might include a call from friends who need a fourth player for a round of golf, a hike in the woods to enjoy a beautiful day, or a walk to the store when you are out of milk. These activities are great, but make sure you're doing something active on most days.

Reference: American Institute for Cancer Research, Washington, D.C.

Move of the Week: Strengthen Your Core

Your core muscles hold you upright. There is no down time for the core, which includes muscles surrounding the back, front, hips and pelvis. With your core muscles, it is "use them, or lose them." Your core muscles can be improved at any age. Focusing on correct posture is a simple way to strengthen your core muscles.

This week, learn how to "turn on" your core muscles by adding core strengthening moves to your routine.

Turn on your core. Sit on the edge of a firm chair with feet and legs at a 90-degree angle. Place both hands on the front of your body. Draw your bellybutton or midsection toward the center, pretending to lift at the same time — lengthening throughout the middle body. Do not hold your breath. As you do this, the front and back of your body should contract at the same time. Hips should be in a neutral position — not tipped forward or backward. Roll your shoulders back slightly and relax, while keeping your chest high and sit tall.

Learn what this position feels like and hold it when you walk, drive, brush your teeth, do household chores, work on the computer, and while you stand in line or sit in traffic. Repetition will turn core strengthening into a habit — then into a healthy behavior.

To strengthen your core beyond practicing good posture, **add core-strengthening moves.** Try a variety of moves, including the basic "abdominal crunch." If you have a fitness ball, do the "abdominal ball pass" on the Walk Kansas Steps to Fitness page.

Another good resource is the Mayo Clinic slide show "Exercises to Improve Your Core Strength," which demonstrates 13 core strengthening exercises.

Start by adding a couple of these moves on two to three days a week. Always take a day off in between to rest your muscles.

Eating Out: Choosing Healthy Ethnic Foods

Cinco de Mayo celebrations feature foods with a Mexican influence. The popularity of Hispanic style food and beverages has surged the past several years, making it the most popular ethnic food in America. This includes food consumed both at home and away.

You can make healthful choices when eating Mexican food at a restaurant, banquet buffet, or when prepared at home. Be aware that some of these foods will be a trap for calories, fat, and sodium. Fried tortilla chips and crispy salad bowls, high-fat meats, cheese, sour cream, refried beans, and deep-fried combo dishes are common choices among healthful alternatives.

First, monitor your portions. Most meals at a Mexican restaurant start with chips and salsa. Consider salsa a free food, but limit the chips. Put a handful of chips onto your plate or napkin and don't go back for more. Guacamole is rich in healthful fats; however, it is still good to enjoy in small portions. Ask for toppings on the side and request low-fat or fat-free sour cream when available.

Another strategy to limit portion sizes is to pack half of your meal in a to-go container when served and enjoy as "planned-overs" the next day. Ordering from the a la carte menu will allow you to control

portion sizes somewhat. Try a soft-shell chicken taco with a side of black beans.

Items on the menu that get a green light include chicken or vegetable fajitas, taco salad (without the fried shell), grilled seafood or lean meat/poultry entrees,

and dishes that include plenty of fresh vegetables. Beans are loaded with fiber, protein, and complex carbohydrates, and they are low in calories. Choose a side of black beans or pinto beans as an alternative to refried beans. If you love refried beans, buy the fat-free version in the grocery store and enjoy them when eating at home.

Mexican inspired food is even more appealing when boosted with fresh flavors. Add extra salsa, freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice, jalapeno pepper, fresh cilantro, and other herbs. This Mango, Cucumber, and Jicama Salad adds a punch of flavor and crunch to Mexican meals. Jicama, a root vegetable originating in the Mexican peninsula, provides the crunch, and it is sometimes called a "Mexican water chestnut." This salad is low in calories and high in nutrition.



Try this quacamole recipe from Walk Kansas 2013.

Mango, Cucumber, and Jicama Salad

Makes 8 servings.

Salad Ingredients:

- 2 mangoes, peeled and chopped into cubes*
- ½ cucumber, roughly chopped or sliced
- ½ small jicama, peeled and cubed (about 1 cup)
- 3 green onions, sliced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

Dressing Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons frozen orange juice concentrate
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cumin
- ⅛ teaspoon chili powder
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon sugar

Directions:

- 1) Combine salad ingredients in a bowl.
- 2) Mix dressing ingredients.
- 3) Toss all ingredients with dressing. Cover and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours before serving.

*How to cut a mango: <http://www.mango.org/how-cut-mango>

Nutrition Information per serving: 70 calories; 2 g fat; 13 g carbohydrates; 2 g fiber; 40 mg sodium. One serving provides 25 percent of the daily value for vitamin C, and 20 percent of vitamin A.

