

Walk Kansas

celebrate healthy living

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Walk Kansas 2016

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Maintain Your Strength

If you have been doing strengthening exercises each week, in addition to walking, you should feel stronger by now. So, what happens if you stop doing strengthening exercises, how long does it take to get out of shape? It depends. Most participants in this program would likely fall into the category of a recreational exerciser and it would take 2 to 4 weeks of inactivity before you see real change in your fitness level. Serious athletes will see de-conditioning happen more quickly.

If you stop exercising, the first change you will notice is a decline in your aerobic fitness. You might feel out of breath while walking up stairs or when you walk longer distances. The affect on your muscle strength and endurance will be slight during the first few weeks of inactivity. After that, your muscles will not feel as firm and you will notice a decline in muscle strength. The effect inactivity has on your waistline is based on input and output. When you exercise, you burn more calories. If you stop being active, you will need to take in fewer calories to avoid weight gain.

The good news is that you can reverse any of the negative health changes from inactivity simply by being physically active again. If you lose muscle strength and endurance, you can get it back by returning to regular cardiovascular activity (walking) and by doing strengthening exercises a couple of times each week.

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Maintain Your Strength continued

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The Walk Kansas program is designed to be a catalyst for change – to nudge you to be more active for at least 8 weeks. Hopefully, you have experienced how much better you feel when you are more active each day. This feeling of improved health is called “intrinsic” motivation. Because you feel better, you are motivated to continue a more active lifestyle. Your motivation to be active is internal (how you feel) rather than external (motivated by prizes or things). Internal motivation is more powerful than external motivation and the lifestyle changes you make, as a result, will last longer.

2014 Success Stories

After a heart operation 8 years ago and now with AFib, vigorous exercise for me is walking up and down hills with my dogs. I appreciate your definition of “vigorous” activity, since I think this helps people like me participate. “Vigorous” for me has certainly changed in the last 10 years!

– Miami County

As a team captain, I saw the group become increasingly able to meet their goal. It was fun to watch everyone’s strength and endurance increase over 8 weeks.

– Seward County

As a result of Walk Kansas, our team consumed a lot more fruits and vegetables than before the program.

– Greenwood County

Sleep Matters

We feel better after a good night’s sleep. We are more alert, have more energy, perform better at work, think more clearly, and feel happier. Sleep helps our immune system function. It enhances our ability to learn and remember. Getting enough sleep reduces our risk of injury and accident.

Adequate sleep is important for good health; yet, many of us are sleeping fewer than than 6 hours a night (the recommended amount is 7 to 8 hours) and about one in three adults report having difficulty sleeping at any one time. If you have trouble sleeping, some of these lifestyle changes may help.

- Establish a sleep pattern. This helps regulate your body clock to a specific cycle. Avoid oversleeping, even if you have a poor night’s sleep. When you get up, turn on all the lights in your room and let in some sunlight if possible. Light signals your body that it is time to be active.
- Exercise every day, especially the day after a bad night’s sleep. A brisk walk or more vigorous activity during late afternoon can be especially helpful for getting good sleep.
- Develop a sleep-promoting routine. Start winding down 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime with light reading, listening to quiet music, taking a warm bath, or whatever relaxes you. Avoid checking your email just before bedtime. Keep a pad and pencil handy to jot down a thought to remember or something you need to do the next day. Then let it go – no need to worry about it after that.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine. While alcohol can help you feel drowsy, it interferes with deep and continuous sleep. Avoid alcohol at least 3 hours before bedtime. Caffeine is a stimulant so avoid it after mid-afternoon.

Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

Point-of-Decision Prompts

Point-of-decision prompts are motivational signs or notes placed where you make decisions. Physical activity prompts are often placed near stairwells, elevators, and escalators to encourage use of the stairs. They also can help you make better food choices when placed next to vending machines or on menus in restaurants.

These visual cues are helpful. Research shows they are effective when placed in worksites, malls, office buildings, airports, and other public places. They can be effective in your home. Place a note on the refrigerator door reminding your family about healthful snacks. Tape a cheery note to your bathroom mirror reminding you to take a walk that day. Think about where a point-of-decision prompt would be helpful in your home or workplace.

Enjoy Heart-Healthy Avocados

Avocados have been called the “darling” of the produce section. Perhaps your first thought is of guacamole or mashed avocado toast. Avocados are also popular in salads, sandwiches, wraps, smoothies and even brownies!

Avocados are promoted as “heart healthy” because of their nutrient profile. They offer nearly 20 vitamins and minerals, including potassium, which helps control blood pressure, and B vitamins, which help fight off disease and infection. While they are high in fat, avocados contain monounsaturated fat – a fat that helps lower bad cholesterol.

Moderation is the key when eating avocados. They have a lot of calories; one fifth of a medium avocado (the recommended serving size) contributes 50 calories. They

play a role in promoting heart health when you replace saturated fat with foods containing healthful fats (mono-unsaturated) like avocados. Because of their fiber and fat content, avocados help you feel satisfied and full.

When choosing avocados, hold and gently squeeze the fruit in the palm of your hand. Ripe and ready-to-eat avocados will be firm yet yield to gentle pressure. Avocados available in the store usually take 4 to 5 days to ripen and should be stored at room temperature. When ripe, store avocados in the refrigerator.

Once they are cut, avocados turn brown. To avoid this, sprinkle cut, mashed, or sliced avocado with lemon or lime juice and store them in an airtight container in your refrigerator for a day.

Share Your Story

Your success story is a powerful motivator for others. It helps us determine the impact of this program. Please participate in a survey about Walk Kansas to tell us more about your experience, share a success story if you have one, and help us make this program better. To join the survey online, go to: https://kstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cu6KC9hsuTal273

Contact your local K-State Research and Extension office for a paper survey.

Bruschetta with Avocado Spread

Makes 6 servings.

Ingredients:

- ½ 1 lb. wheat baguette
- 4 Roma tomatoes, seeded and diced
- ⅓ cup minced red onion
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- ¼ cup fresh basil, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 ripe avocado, pitted and mashed
- 2 teaspoons lime juice
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F and place rack in the middle.
2. Slice bread in 1 inch thick pieces and place on a baking sheet. Bake

10 minutes or until toasted, flipping each piece 7 minutes into baking. After toasting, allow bread to cool 5 minutes.

3. Place the tomatoes, onion, garlic, basil, olive oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper in a bowl and stir gently.
4. In another bowl, mash the avocado with a spoon and mix in the lime juice. (Optional – add cayenne.)
5. Spread the mashed avocado on each slice of bread and top with tomato mixture. Serve immediately.

*Assemble as many servings as your family will likely eat at one time. The bread will get soggy if stored as leftovers. Tomato mix that is left over can be added to spaghetti sauce or soup, served on a salad, or used as topping for a flatbread or pizza.



Nutrition information per serving: 140 calories; 8 g fat; 17 g carbohydrates; 3 g protein; 3 g fiber; 125 mg sodium.