



WALK KANSAS

K-STATE
Research and Extension

www.WalkKansas.org

2024 WEEK NINE



Walk Kansas Wrap Up

You did it!! Congratulations on completing Walk Kansas 2024. If you have been walking, or doing some other type of activity, and adding strengthening/stretching exercises at least twice a week, you probably have noticed that many of your daily activities are easier, that you have more stamina and endurance, and you feel stronger.

You have made conscious choices to eat better and move more these past 8 weeks, and our hope is that these positive lifestyle changes continue for you. So, what happens if you hit the “pause” button on your physical activity routine? It depends. Most participants in this program 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.

If you stop exercising, the first change you will notice is a decline in your aerobic fitness. You’ll notice that you get out of breath more quickly when climbing stairs or walking longer distances. While cardio conditioning falls faster than strength, it is easier to regain. It is also important to remember that taking time off from exercise occasionally can be a good thing, and a good exercise routine includes rest days.

The effect of inactivity on your muscle strength and endurance will be slight during the first few weeks. 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 to avoid weight gain.

Other factors play a role in how quickly you lose health benefits after you stop exercising. When comparing adults who were either 20 to 30 years old or 65 to 75 years old, the older adults lost fitness gains almost twice as fast as the younger set. The good news is that

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Coming Next Year

Walk Kansas 2025 -- March 30 – May 2.

This will be Walk Kansas #25!

if you have fallen out of your activity routine, you can regain fitness and health benefits simply by being active again.

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 experience how much better you feel when you are more active every 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 much more powerful, and the lifestyle changes you make, as a result, will last longer.

Have a Plan B

There will always be days when your plans for getting physical activity will be challenged. Some of these will be unexpected and others you might be able to anticipate, such as schedule changes, weather, lack of time, etc. For obstacles you can anticipate, have a Plan B ready before you encounter them. This will increase the likelihood that you will overcome these barriers successfully. If lack of time is a problem, take several 5 to 10 minutes walks throughout the day, wake up early to exercise, or combine physical activity with household tasks. If weather spoils your plan, identify indoor spaces where you can be active or do a no-equipment workout at home.

The same approach can be used to prevent a relapse where you return to old inactive habits. The first step is planning for it, because at some point you will experience a relapse. If you have a bad day or bad week, remember that lapses are normal, and having a short period of missed activity does not erase all your progress. Focus on the big picture and think about all of the progress you have already made, then get back on track with the activities you enjoy.

Again, be ready with your Plan B by answering these questions: What two steps can I take to get back on track immediately after a lapse? What positive thoughts will I use to help me get back on track? How will I reward myself once I get back on track?

Grilling Tips for Healthful Eating

Memorial Day weekend marks the start of grilling season for many people. While meat and poultry are popular choices for grilling, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) (<https://www.aicr.org/news/guide-to-healthy-grilling/>) reminds us that cooking these foods with intense heat can lead to formation of potential carcinogens. Heterocyclic amines (HCAs) form in meat when its proteins react to the intense heat of the grill, and studies link HCAs to cancer risk. The good news is you can modify your grilling techniques to reduce the chance of cancer risk. Here are some tips.

Marinate meat before grilling and trim fat from meat to reduce flare-ups and charring. Be sure to use a thermometer to test the internal temperature (<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/safe-temperature-chart>) for doneness. Cook to a safe temperature, but do not overcook.

Grill more veggies! The bonus is they don't form HCAs when cooked, so that cancer risk is eliminated. Slice veggies the same thickness so they cook evenly. Drizzle or brush with olive oil before cooking. Grill over medium heat to start; close the lid to create the same environment as an oven; flip halfway through cooking time. After removing from heat, season with salt, pepper, herbs, seasoning mix, or a splash of balsamic vinegar.

Add flavor to meals from the grill with a salsa side. There are so many combinations of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and seasonings to enjoy! When the weather heats up, think about a salad as a meal and grill meat or fish to top a colorful salad.

Enjoy these simple grilled pork chops with asparagus and a tomato salad. Add crusty whole grain bread and a small scoop of frozen yogurt topped with fresh fruit and you have a delicious meal!

Recorded Walk Kansas Webinars

The Science of Happiness

Foot Care and Shoe Selection

Habit Shift for Better Health

<https://www.walkkansas.org/newsletter/2024.html>

Grilled Basil Lemon Pork Chops, Asparagus and Tomato Salad

Makes 4 Servings

Ingredients:

Pork Chops

4 4-ounce pork chops

Juice of 1 large lemon

2 teaspoons minced garlic

3 tablespoons olive oil

3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

Asparagus

1 pound asparagus spears

1 tablespoon olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

1 lemon wedge

Tomato Salad

1 pint grape tomatoes, sliced in half

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

3 tablespoons finely chopped onion

Fresh basil, chopped

Salt and pepper to taste



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Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Wash tomatoes, lemons, asparagus, and basil under cold running water.
3. Place the pork chops in a gallon-sized zippered plastic bag. Add the lemon juice, garlic, oil, and basil. Zip the bag closed, then turn the bag several times to be sure the pork is all coated. Place bag in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours to marinate.
4. Prepare the tomato salad: Slice tomatoes and toss all ingredients together in a medium-sized bowl. Cover and refrigerate.
5. After pork has marinated, prepare asparagus by removing the woody ends. Bend each stalk gently about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way down the stalk until it naturally breaks where the woody part begins.
6. Place asparagus spears in a shallow bowl or platter; drizzle with olive oil and toss spears to coat. Season with salt and pepper and toss again.
7. Heat grill to medium heat, about 400°F.
8. Place pork chops on the grill; place asparagus across the grill plates perpendicular to the bars. Grill with the lid closed for about 5 minutes. Turn the pork chops; use tongs to roll the asparagus spears for even grill marks.
9. Grill asparagus until the spears are tender and crisp. Transfer to a platter and squeeze lemon over before serving.
10. Grill pork chops until the center reaches a temperature of 145°F. Remove the pork from the grill and allow it to sit for about 3 minutes.
11. Serve pork and asparagus with tomato salad.

Nutrition Information per 1 serving (pork, asparagus, tomato salad): 320 calories; 20 g total fat (3.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 9 g carbohydrates; 28 g protein; 3 g fiber; 150 mg sodium; 5 g sugar.

**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and
Cooperative Extension Service**

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