



Move More – Feel Better

Physical Activity Guide

"A lot of people never get to know how 'feeling good' feels. They don't know what they are missing." Dr. Wayne H. Osness, Lawrence, KS

People of all ages, types, sizes, and abilities can benefit from moving and being active each day. While the benefits of physical activity have been proven, 52% of adults in Kansas do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits.

Why physical activity?

Physical activity means moving your body to use energy. Ideally, energy you take in as calories is balanced with energy your body uses while moving during the day. Being active throughout your lifetime can help you live a longer, healthier, and happier life.

Take a moment to consider benefits of physical activity that are important to you and **check the ones** that you hope to get from being physically active.

- Increase your chances of living longer
- Lower your risk for a heart attack
- Help control your blood pressure
- Lower your risk for chronic disease
- Help you feel energetic
- Improve your posture and flexibility
- Help maintain your bones and joints, and manage pain and stiffness
- Reduce your feelings of stress, anxiety and depression
- Increase your muscle strength
- Help you reach and maintain a healthy weight
- Slow functional decline as you age
- Help you sleep better at night
- Help you look good
- Improve your fitness level
- Spend time with your friends
- Feel better about yourself

How much, what kind of activity?

There are two categories of activity and both are important. **Aerobic and strengthening** activity recommendations are identified through the 2008 Physical Guidelines for Americans. (If you are participating in Walk Kansas, you will count activity minutes that meet these guidelines.)

The other category is **lifestyle activities**, or small bouts of activity that you weave in throughout the day. (If these are less than 10 minutes at a time, they do not count toward Walk Kansas minutes.)

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Aerobic and Strengthening Activities

Physical movement that is very beneficial to your health includes both aerobic and strengthening activities. Aerobic activities speed your heart rate and breathing as they help improve heart and lung fitness. Strengthening activities help build and maintain bones and muscles. As we age, we naturally lose muscle strength unless we make a conscious effort to slow down this process.

Walking is a type of aerobic activity that most people can do, however, there are other options. Physical activity guidelines recommend 2 hours and 30 minutes a week (minimum) of moderate activities, such as biking, canoeing, tennis (doubles), walking briskly, water aerobics, ballroom or line dancing, using your manual wheelchair, some gardening (mowing with push mower, raking), and sports where you catch and throw (volleyball, softball, etc.) **Do the Talk Test: During moderate activity, you should be able to talk, but not sing.**

If possible, you should also include some vigorous activity. A good test for vigorous activity is if you can only say a few words without stopping to catch your breath. If you are not active now, start with a moderate level and include vigorous activities when you are able. These include jogging, jumping rope, biking faster than 10 miles per hour, aerobic dance, tennis (singles), hiking uphill, fast dancing, and sports with a lot of running (basketball, soccer, etc.)

Strengthen Your Muscles

In addition to aerobic activity, the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans also recommend that you do muscle strengthening exercises at least 2 days each week. Try to include all major muscle groups such as legs, hips, back, chest, stomach, shoulders, and arms. **When reporting for Walk Kansas, include minutes of aerobic (moderate and vigorous) and strengthening activities that you perform for a minimum of 10 minutes at a time.**

Caution – Know when to stop

Always pay attention to your body and the signs and symptoms of overexertion. If any of the following symptoms occur, stop exercising immediately and see your doctor before you start to exercise again:

- Pain or pressure in the chest, abdomen, neck, jaw or arms

- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or fainting
- Extreme fatigue
- Unaccustomed shortness of breath
- Slow recovery from exercise

If you have pain from a chronic disease, start slow and keep record of any changes in pain levels as you become more active. Walking and other appropriate forms of physical activity can help you manage pain.

Lifestyle Activities

Lifestyle and work patterns have changed over the years and many of us now devote a good portion of the day to screen time -- at computers or watching television -- or driving in our cars. This pattern of prolonged sitting has been associated with increased risk of developing heart disease and Type 2 diabetes, and can cause back and shoulder pain.

Even if you exercise every day, you could still be at risk from prolonged sitting. Research is showing that an hour in the gym may not make up for many hours sitting down. There are simple things you can do to add a little movement throughout your day to increase blood circulation and move your muscles.

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Stand up and move around when talking on the phone
- Park further away from your office
- Move during television commercials
- Rock in a rocking chair while you read
- Sit on a fitness ball instead of a chair
- Stand up and move every hour
- Learn exercises you can do at your desk
- Walk on a treadmill while you watch TV
- Stand up and sit down 10 times in a row every half hour

For every hour that you sit, try to move for five to 10 minutes. Think of little ways to add movement such as keeping files out of reach so you have to get out of your chair, and keep the coffee pot as far away from your desk as possible.

At home, cook meals and make bread from scratch, mow your lawn, do your own house cleaning. All of these small lifestyle movements are meaningful. Even fidgeting while sitting could be a good thing, according to some studies. (*Lifestyle activities are very important, however, they do not count toward Walk Kansas minutes unless they are performed for at least 10 consecutive minutes at a moderate or vigorous level.*)

Develop a Lifelong Love

Regular physical activity is important at each stage of life and staying active means doing things you enjoy. Choose activities that are fun for you and appropriate for your age and physical condition.

As a child you enjoyed many types of play and movement. In your teen years, it might have been competitive and/or team sports. During adulthood many prefer walking, jogging and hiking, or continue with community team sports. As an older adult, try walking, water exercise and chair exercises. Adapt as you go -- just continue to move!

Helpful Resources

- **Walk Kansas:** <http://www.walkkansas.org> You'll find a variety of videos under "Steps to Fitness" including: Walking basics, strength training with resistance bands, light hand weights, and a stability ball. "Healthy Eating for Life" provides tips for making good nutrition choices and videos that guide you through preparing healthy recipes, reading nutrition labels, and understanding portion sizes.
- **Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans:** <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/> Includes "Be Active Your Way: A Guide for Adults" (ages 18 – 64).
- **"Exercise and Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide from the National Institute on Aging":** <http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/ExerciseGuide/> Order a print copy or download pdf.
- **National Institute on Aging:** <http://www.NIHSeniorHealth.gov> Health and wellness information for older adults. Lots of videos, articles and stories.
- **Walk with Ease:** A walking program to encourage people with and without arthritis to keep active. Contact the Kansas Arthritis Program, <http://www.kdheks.gov/arthritis> 785-296-1917; or Arthritis Foundation, Kansas Office at 1-800-362-1108.

Sources:

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3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2009. <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/cdi>
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Guidelines for Americans. 2008. <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>

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