

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

# Walk Kansas

*celebrate healthy living*

www.WalkKansas.org  
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## Have you checked your posture lately?

Good posture enables you to walk comfortably and easily, and it helps you breathe easier and avoid back pain. When you practice good walking posture, it also makes it easier for you to walk further and faster.

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.

While walking, your focus should be about 20 feet ahead of you. Keep your eyes forward and avoid looking down. Your chin should be parallel to the ground, which will reduce the stress on your neck and back.

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 swelling, tingling, and numbness in your 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 walking 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. Resist the urge to engage with your smartphone while walking because you will look down and lose good posture.

Posture is important when standing and sitting as well. When you practice good posture, you will appear more confident, and it can make you look up to 10 pounds thinner — instantly.



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## Exercise and Cancer

Exercise is powerful in preventing or delaying onset of chronic disease. Research also shows that moving more can help guard against many types of cancer. Experts estimate that a least a third of all adult cancer cases are linked to lifestyle. Habits that can help prevent cancer include: not smoking, eating healthfully, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol consumption, reducing and managing stress, and exercising regularly. These are all things you have some control over.

Every healthful choice you make — and every unhealthy habit you drop — helps you reduce your risk for developing many types of cancers, including colorectal, breast, endometrial, prostate, and lung cancers. According to the American Institute for Cancer Research Expert Report, just 30 minutes of moderate exercise every day can cut your risk of many common cancers by 30 to 50 percent. It doesn't really matter what type of exercise you do, or when — as long as you do it.

## 5K For the Fight!

K-State Research and Extension and the Johnson Cancer Research Center will host the first 5K for the Fight and 1.5-mile Fun Walk on the beautiful Kansas State University Manhattan campus on May 7, 2016. All proceeds will be donated to cancer research at the center.

We are excited for this perfect partnership.

Exercise, nutrition, and maintaining a healthy weight all reduce cancer risk, and Walk Kansas has helped thousands of people reach fitness goals over the years. Come run or walk to support your health AND K-State cancer research!

More information is available at [walkkansas.org/5K.html](http://walkkansas.org/5K.html). To register, go to: [runsignup.com/Race/KS/Manhattan/WalkKansas5K](http://runsignup.com/Race/KS/Manhattan/WalkKansas5K).



## Eat the "Get Rich" Way

Is it possible to "get rich" from food? It certainly is, when "getting rich" applies to your health. Nutrient-dense foods offer rich benefits with relatively few calories. The term "nutrient dense" indicates that the nutrients and other beneficial components in a food have not been diluted by the addition of calories from added solid fats, sugars, sodium, or refined starches. Nutrient-dense foods also retain naturally occurring components such as dietary fiber. A good example of this is whole fruit and fruit juice. The fiber is retained in the whole fruit, making it nutrient dense.

All vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat milk and milk products, and lean meats and poultry are nutrient-dense foods, provided they are prepared without adding solid fats or sugars.

The American diet is said to be increasingly energy-rich (calories) yet nutrient-poor. There are many opportunities throughout your day to make the nutrient-rich choice. Take lettuce, for example. Iceberg lettuce is very popular, but the least nutritious. It is a good source of water and very few nutrients. The nutrient value goes up as the green in leaves gets darker. Choose a dark green leafy lettuce or spinach for salads, on sandwiches,

and in wraps. Go for hummus and veggies instead of chips and dip. Choose a whole-grain bread instead of white. Beans are a nutrient dynamo food high in low-fat protein, packed with fiber and containing a host of nutrients. Add them to soups, stews, burritos, or scrambled eggs. Sprinkle them in salads and blend with spices for great spreads or dips. Beans are the only food recognized in two food groups, vegetables and proteins.

Nutrient density applies to beverages also. Soda is a classic "empty calorie" beverage. Choose water, tea, or non-fat milk with meals, and drink water throughout the day. Fruit-infused water is a refreshing change from plain water.

The salad on page 3 is packed with nutrients and is very satisfying, with black beans providing protein, and healthful fats from oil and the avocado. You can serve it as a layered salad in a bowl for your family, or carry it as lunch in a jar.

Here is the secret to packing a perfect and tasty jar salad:

1. Dressing goes in first to keep salad ingredients from getting soggy.
2. Add a grain, protein, and chunky vegetables.
3. Next, the fixings, such as cheese, nuts, and dried fruit.
4. Leafy greens go in last. This way they stay dry and will go in first when your turn the jar over and unload it into a bowl.

## Building Strength

Walking and other types of aerobic activity provide many health benefits, but they don't make your muscles strong. Strength training does. You can feel a difference when your body is stronger. Strengthening exercises also improve your balance, coordination, and agility, allowing you to perform everyday movements much easier.

You should do muscle-strengthening activities two to three days a week, with a rest day between. Work all major muscle groups including the legs, hips, back, stomach, chest, shoulders, and arms. Following are strengthening exercises you can do at home or in a gym:

**Free weights or dumbbells.** These are classic tools to strengthen your upper body. Start with a low weight, and gradually work up.

**Body weight exercises.** These require little or no equipment since they use your body weight for resistance. Try push-ups, pull-ups, abdominal crunches, and leg squats.

**Resistance tubing or bands.** These offer weight-like resistance when you pull on them. They are

inexpensive and good for building strength in arms and other muscles, and they are available in varying degrees of resistance.

If you are new to strength training, start slowly. Make sure you warm up with 5 to 10 minutes of stretching or walking. Choose an appropriate weight or resistance level that will challenge you.

Each exercise set should include 12 repetitions, meaning you will lift the weight the same way 12 times in a row, then rest. Try to perform two to four sets of 12 repetitions with each exercise.

Work opposing muscle groups with each set. For example, if you start with a set of exercises using your right arm, switch to the left and perform the same set. Then repeat your right arm, then the left again.

A collection of "how to" videos on strength training and exercise basics can be found at [www.walkkansas.org](http://www.walkkansas.org) in the Physical Activity section of the website.

Links:

<http://www.walkkansas.org/activity/strength.html>

<http://www.walkkansas.org/activity/basics.html>

## Layered Black Bean and Spinach Salad

*Makes 6 servings*

### Ingredients:

6 tablespoons olive or canola oil  
3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice  
3 tablespoons rice vinegar  
1 tablespoon prepared mustard  
12 cups baby spinach leaves, stems removed, loosely packed  
3 cups halved cherry or grape tomatoes  
1 medium bell pepper, seeded, cut into quarters and thinly sliced  
1 medium bell pepper, seeded, cut into quarters and thinly sliced  
2 15-ounce cans black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 cup shredded reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese  
1 medium avocado, peeled, pitted, and sliced into ½-inch pieces

### Directions:

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar, and mustard. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. In a deep, clear glass bowl, layer the salad as follows: 6 cups of spinach leaves, 1½ cups of tomatoes, ½ of the yellow bell pepper, ½ of the red bell pepper, ½ of the beans, and ½ cup shredded cheese.
3. Repeat the procedure and top the salad with the avocado. To serve, pass the salad around the table, followed by the dressing.



### Nutrition Information per serving:

360 calories  
21 g fat  
17 g carbohydrates  
13 g protein  
13 g fiber  
624 mg sodium

Recipe reprinted with permission from the American Institute for Cancer Research, [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org)  
Add avocado just before serving or omit if using this as a prepackaged jar salad.