



Stand Often, 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, body types, and physical 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 chances of living longer
- Lower risk for a heart attack
- Help control blood pressure
- Lower risk for chronic disease
- Have more energy
- Improve posture and flexibility
- Help maintain bones and joints, manage pain and stiffness
- Reduce your feelings of stress, anxiety and depression
- Increase muscle strength
- Reach and maintain a healthy weight
- Slow functional decline from aging
- Sleep better at night
- Improve fitness level
- Manage symptoms of chronic disease
- Spend time with friends, family
- 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. These should be done for at least 10 minutes at a time.

The other category is **lifestyle activities**, or small bouts of activity that you weave throughout the day. It is especially important to break periods of sitting that last longer than one hour.

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.

Break Prolonged Sitting

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, watching television, and driving/traveling. This pattern of prolonged sitting has been associated with increased risk of developing heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, and can cause back and shoulder pain.

Even if you exercise 30 minutes or more every day, your health could still be at risk from prolonged sitting. During every hour that you sit, try to move for several minutes. If you have a desk job, think of ways to add some movement. Keep files out of reach so you have to get out of your chair, and keep the coffee pot, printer, or waste basket as far away from your desk as possible. Even standing for a few minutes every hour makes a difference. Some people find that computer alarms or phone apps are helpful in reminding them to move every hour.

At home -- cook meals, mow your lawn, do your own house cleaning, etc. Break up prolonged sitting while you watch television or while involved in other screen time activities. All of these small lifestyle movements are meaningful. Even fidgeting while sitting could be a good thing, according to some studies.

Physical Activity for Life

Staying active throughout life means doing things you enjoy and are appropriate for your age and physical condition.

Children can learn basic skills through games and activities. The emphasis should be on enjoyment rather than competition so a child develops a positive attitude towards physical activity that can last a lifetime.

Group activities and team sports provide fun and social time during **adolescent and teen** years. Weight bearing exercise such as running and walking are important to develop bone density.

Adults often struggle to find time for exercise so scheduling physical activity time is helpful. You can expect age-related muscle and bone loss as you get older, so add strengthening exercises several times a week.

Older adults should stick to a comfortable physical activity routine. Water exercise is good as it can strengthen muscles and provide heart healthy activity with minimal impact on joints.

A supportive environment of family and friends can make all the difference when it comes to staying active throughout life. Adapt activities as needed and continue to move everyday!

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. Includes 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:

1. United States Department of Agriculture, *MyPlate*. 2011. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/foodgroups/physicalactivity.html>
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2010-PolicyDocument.htm>
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>



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service