



# WALK KANSAS

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

[www.WalkKansas.org](http://www.WalkKansas.org)

## 2025 Week One



## Walk Kansas Celebrates 25 Years!

Time goes by quickly when you are having fun! It has been a wonderful 25 years, nudging and encouraging you all to move more every day. As one of our Walk Kansas champions, Marjorie Neely, said (at age 94), "We've got to keep moving. It makes everything easier."

Whether it is your first year participating in Walk Kansas, or your 25<sup>th</sup>, we are glad you have joined us! A long-term goal of this program is to help you prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease. If you have a chronic condition, all the tips we share will help you manage it better. This year, some information will focus on diabetes prevention, which is so important for all of us. This weekly newsletter will provide tips on how you can be more physically active, discuss nutrition topics, and offer a tasty recipe to try. We are also delighted to partner with the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office, and Courtney will share important safety tips each week.

During this first week of Walk Kansas, make sure you read through the Activity Guide ([ksre-learn.com/wkactivityguide](http://ksre-learn.com/wkactivityguide)) and complete the Rockport Fitness Walking Test and the Flexibility Test. When Walk Kansas concludes, you can complete these again and compare results. Also, check the Walk Kansas Participant Guide ([ksre-learn.com/wkparticipantguide25](http://ksre-learn.com/wkparticipantguide25)) for information on logging minutes/steps, fruits/veggies, chatting with team mates, and more. Newsletters from previous Walk Kansas ([walkkansas.org/newsletter/](http://walkkansas.org/newsletter/)) programs can provide you with even more information!

Now, it is time to get moving. I hope Walk Kansas will inspire you to realize and enjoy the many benefits an active lifestyle can provide.

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So Many Reasons to Eat Oatmeal

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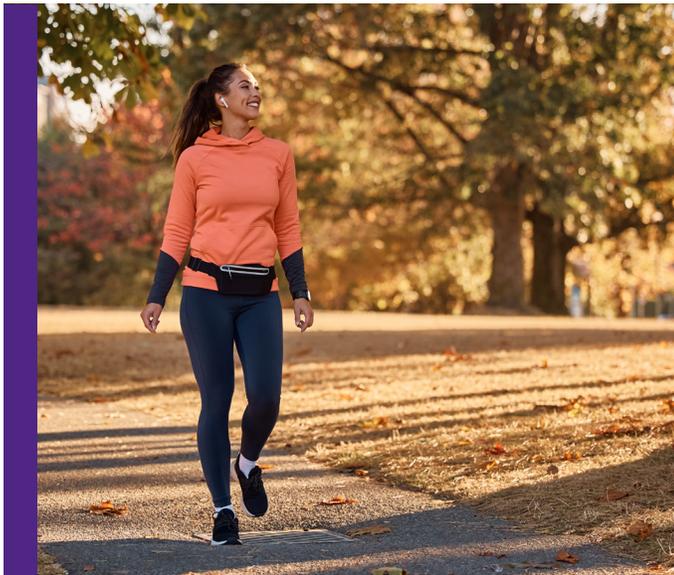
# Getting Started

Every activity session should include a warm-up, a conditioning phase, and a cool-down. When pressed for time, many often skip the warm-up and cool-down phases, but these are crucial for keeping your body injury free and flexible.

The warm-up helps your body adjust from rest to exercise. Take 5 to 10 minutes for light activity, like leisurely walking, to increase your body temperature, gradually increase blood flow, heart rate, and breathing. You can include some stretching like arm circles, shoulder rolls, and knee lifts.

The conditioning phase follows the warm-up, and this is where you monitor the intensity, or how hard you are exercising. Strive for moderate intensity, working hard enough so you can just barely carry on a conversation. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (<https://odphp.health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/physical-activity-guidelines>) recommend a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. If you exercise at vigorous intensity (where you can only say a few words while you exercise), you can get similar benefits with 75 minutes of activity per week.

Just as important as the warm-up is a cool down after exercise. Take a few minutes to slow your walking or activity pace and allow your breathing to return to normal. After the cool-down, your warm muscles are ready for stretching. This is the best time to do static stretching, where you hold a stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Do upper and lower body stretches. Never stretch to the point of pain – just slight discomfort. Stay relaxed as you stretch and breathe in and out slowly, don't hold your breath.



## Breath Fresh, Train Smart, Stay Safe!

Hello Walk Kansas participants! My name is Courtney Nowland and I'm a traffic safety specialist with the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office. For the next 8 weeks, I'll be walking alongside you all and providing safe walking/biking information!

My office works with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and DCCCA to provide safe driving information around the state of Kansas. Part of that includes how to prevent pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries. I'm based out of Overland Park, and I love to get out and explore our lovely state. I also love walking and biking, so making sure people are safe while doing these activities is a huge passion of mine! I hope to leave you all with some helpful information along this journey of Walk Kansas.

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#### Kansas State University Walk Kansas

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

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## Walk Kansas Webinars

**April 16: Your Heart and Diabetes: A Close Connection**

**April 23: Resistance Exercise – Getting Started**

**May 7: Foot Care**

**May 14: Blue Zones: Keys to Living Longer and Better**

**Time: 12:10 p.m.**



Link to join or scan the QR code below:

<https://ksu.zoom.us/j/97410290196>

## What Happens When You Eat Healthy?

Weight loss is a common goal for making the decision to eat better, but what if your motivation to eat healthy is much more?

**Feel Energized.** A healthy diet is one that includes macronutrients (proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, which give your body energy) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals.) When you eat healthy regularly, you will soon notice that your energy level is more consistent and you sleep better. When you eat more healthful foods, you will start to crave those foods. You can develop a dislike for less-healthy options that might seem too processed or too salty or sugary.

**Improved mood and memory.** A healthful diet plays an important role in supporting cognitive health and can even lower the risk of dementia. Research also shows a connection between diet and mood. The Mediterranean diet, in particular, may be linked to better mental health.

**Better gut health.** So, why does this matter? It turns out that your gut and your brain are connected, and the two routinely communicate about changes in the body. The brain in the human gut is called the enteric nervous system, or ENS – thin layers of more than 100 million nerve cells lining the gastrointestinal tract. The connection between the ENS and the brain may help explain the mental-physical relationship, meaning that foods promoting gut health are also good for your brain and can help ease conditions like depression and anxiety. Learn more about the healthy body/healthy brain connection ([ksre-learn.com/MF3602](https://ksre-learn.com/MF3602)).

**Chronic disease prevention/management.** What you eat impacts the health of your heart, can reduce cancer risk, and prevent or delay diabetes and help you manage it better if you have diabetes. And a healthy diet promotes strong bones and teeth.

Walk Kansas has promoted healthy eating from the beginning! Watch for more tips to eat healthy and enjoy this recipe that was often served at Walk Kansas celebration events.

## Corn and Black Bean Salsa

Makes 10 Servings

### Ingredients:

- 1 15.5-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 cups frozen corn
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- ¼ cup green onion, chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- 1½ tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1½ cups fresh tomatoes, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Prepare produce and rinse under cold running water. Chop vegetables.
3. Combine all ingredients except tomatoes. Chill for 2 hours.
4. Add tomatoes and serve.

### Nutrition Information per ½-cup serving:

80 calories; 2.5 g total fat (0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 13 g carbohydrates; 4 g protein; 4 g fiber; 60 mg sodium

