



Why Sitting Less Matters – and How to Start

Do you sit for long periods of time at a desk, behind a wheel, or in front of a screen? One in four Americans sits at least eight hours each day, which raises their risk of death from heart disease and cancer. Extended sitting has been linked to obesity, increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist, and unhealthy cholesterol levels. Sitting is also bad for your joints and your back, and it slows down your entire body. This can lead to cognitive changes that affect your memory and your ability to think clearly.

Less sitting and more movement can improve physical and mental health. If you sit for long periods of time, start taking a short break from sitting and stand up every 30 minutes. If possible, take a one-minute walk every hour. Here are some other ways to integrate movement into your day:

- **Have a walking meeting** with coworkers rather than sitting in a conference room.
- **Stand** (and walk around if you can) while talking on the phone or watching television.
- During virtual meetings, if you are listening only (with your camera off), use this time to **march in place, do some shoulder rolls**, grab a set of hand weights and **do a few curls**, etc.
- **Schedule “movement windows”** in your calendar for 5- to 10-minute activity breaks.
- **Redesign your workflow:** Place your printer, wastebasket, water bottle, or other essentials further away so you have to stand and walk to them.
- **Create a movement-friendly culture at your workplace, church, organization, etc.:** Encourage standing during group discussions, give speakers a standing ovation during a conference; plan activities for breaks to get everyone moving; plan for a short walk after lunch and dinner.

In This Issue

Why Sitting Less Matters — and How to Start

Squats for Strength

Wiggle While You Work

Spill the Beans: Small Foods, Big Benefits

Recipe: Cuban Black Beans

Coming Next Week

Understanding the Brain–Gut Connection

Stretch Your Hip Flexor

Gut Feelings: The Secret to Better Health

Recipe: Frozen Yogurt Bites

- **Try temptation bundling.** Allow yourself to watch your favorite show or listen to your go-to podcast **only** while walking or stretching.

It is important to understand that you can be both highly active and highly sedentary at the same time. For example, you could walk, run, or work out for 45 minutes every day but still sit for more than 10 hours per day across work and leisure time. Engaging in moderate-intensity exercise **and** short activity breaks throughout your day will give you the greatest benefits.



Walk Kansas Learning Lounge

Webinar time: Wednesdays at 12:10p.m. (room opens at 12, noon)

April 15: Wiggle While You Work

April 29: Good Gut Health

May 6: Kindness at Work



Link to join or scan the QR code:

ksu.zoom.us/j/92803723573

All webinars will be recorded.

Squats for Strength

There is one exercise that should be part of everyone's routine — squats. It doesn't matter how old you are, your gender, or what your fitness goals are. Everyone can benefit from this exercise.

Squats are one of the best exercises for your lower body. They are great for strengthening your legs and glutes, and they also strengthen your core. When you do these properly, they also improve knee stability, promote mobility, and improve balance.

The squat is a somewhat complicated movement, and it is so beneficial because it forces the body's parts to work and grow stronger together as a single unit. It is one of the best functional exercises out there!

This is how to do squats:

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Keep your back in a neutral position, and keep your knees centered over your feet.
3. Slowly bend your knees, hips, and ankles, lowering until you reach a 90-degree angle.
4. Return to your starting position.

For a demonstration on doing squats go to:

youtube.com/watch?v=TDu8MMr6_hU&feature=youtu.be

Demonstration of squats with a dumbbell:

youtube.com/watch?v=G4L0VMnRapA&feature=youtu.be

Wiggle While You Work

Sitting for long stretches can leave your body feeling stiff, tired, and less energized, but adding a little "wiggle" to your workday can make a big difference. Join the next Walk Kansas webinar to learn how small bursts of movement can help improve circulation, reduce muscle tension, and keep your mind more alert and focused. These mini-movements can boost productivity and mood, too.

Join Ashley and Sharolyn for some "wiggle time" on Wednesday, April 15, at 12:10 p.m. If you have light hand weights or a stretch band, have those handy. These are helpful, but not necessary. No need to register in advance, just join the webinar.

[Like us on Facebook: Kansas State University Walk Kansas](#)

This newsletter is developed by Sharolyn Flaming Jackson, Family and Consumer Sciences Specialist, K-State Extension

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of Extension, Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts. Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This publication will be made available in an accessible alternative format or in languages other than English upon request. Please contact ksrenews@k-state.edu to request translation services.

Spill the Beans: Small Foods, Big Benefits

Beans and legumes are thought of as the world's No. 1 longevity food. They are nutrition powerhouses and are unique because, nutritionally, they belong to both the protein and vegetable food groups. They have no cholesterol, are high in fiber, and are naturally low in fat. They are also good sources of folate, potassium, iron, and magnesium. Legumes are a versatile and inexpensive choice for people who must control blood sugar.

In addition to being incredibly nutritious and versatile, beans are inexpensive. Canned beans are convenient to have in your pantry. Dry beans require you to plan ahead for soaking and cooking, and they are even more economical. The cost of a ½ serving of dry beans is about one-third the cost of canned beans. You can also cook a large batch of beans, then freeze them in amounts equal to one can of beans to use in recipes. A 15-ounce can of beans (drained) equals 1½ cups cooked beans (¾-1 cup dried beans.) There are four easy steps to cooking beans – clean, rinse, soak, and cook.

There are [three soaking methods](#) for beans: hot soak, traditional soak, and quick soak. The hot soak is recommended because it reduces cooking time and helps dissolve gas-producing oligosaccharides, while consistently yielding tender beans. Place beans in a large pot and add enough water to cover the beans. Heat to boiling and boil for an additional 3 minutes.



Remove beans from heat, cover, and let stand for at least 4 hours. (Place the pot with beans in the refrigerator after they've soaked for an hour.) Drain beans and discard soak water. Rinse beans with fresh cool water. To cook, add fresh water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer gently until beans are tender but firm (45 minutes to 2 hours). Wait to add salt or acidic foods (lemon juice, vinegar, tomatoes, wine, etc.) until beans are cooked as this can toughen them. Lentils and split peas do not require soaking. For more information on cooking with beans and recipes, go to beaninstitute.com or usapulses.org.

Cuban Black Beans (*Slow cooker*)

Makes 8 Servings

Ingredients:

- 1 16-ounce package dry black beans
- ½ cup chopped bell pepper
- ½ cup diced onion
- 2 cloves minced garlic (1 teaspoon)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- 1½ teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- Optional: canned tomatoes or salsa

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Clean, rinse, and soak beans (use the hot soak method described in the accompanying article).
3. Drain beans and discard soaking water. Place soaked beans in a slow cooker with approximately 4 cups of water, just enough to cover.
4. In a small skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add bell pepper, onion, and garlic. Sauté until the onion is translucent. Add to the beans in the slow cooker along with the dried oregano and bay leaf.
5. Place the lid on the beans and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.
6. At the end of cooking time, stir in balsamic vinegar. If you wish to add canned tomatoes or salsa (up to ½ cup), do so now. Allow beans to cook an additional 30 minutes.

Nutrition Information per ½ cup serving: 231 calories; 4 g total fat (5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 37 g carbohydrates; 2 g sugar; 13 g protein; 9 g fiber; 3.5 mg sodium.