



WALK KANSAS

K-STATE
Research and Extension

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2025 Week Three



How to Add Intervals

Intervals are short bursts of vigorous activity; adding these to your activity routine will boost your fitness and brain power, regardless of age.

Interval training can jazz up your activity routine and keep it interesting and fresh. The more vigorous the activity, the more calories you burn, so it makes sense that interval training aids in weight loss. Another benefit is improved cardiovascular fitness, as your heart becomes more efficient and pumps more blood. It can also help lower blood pressure, because blood vessels expand and become more flexible to allow for increased blood flow.

You can include interval training in your physical activity routine at many levels, and it doesn't require special equipment. The key is to start at a level that is right for you and build from there. If walking is your preferred activity, alternate with short bursts of brisk walking or jogging, depending on your fitness level. If you walk outdoors, you could walk faster between certain mailboxes, trees, or other landmarks. If you walk on a treadmill, leave the speed the same and increase the grade for short amounts of time – 30 seconds to 2 minutes – and back down again.

Always begin with a 5-minute warm-up. To add intervals, start with just one or two intense activity bursts and work up from there. Listen to cues your body gives you to avoid injuries and sore muscles. Challenge yourself more as your stamina improves.

While most people can include interval training safely, it may not be appropriate for everyone. If you haven't exercised regularly or have a chronic health condition, be sure to check with your physician before adding any type of interval training.

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Improve Your Flexibility

Flexibility tends to diminish as you get older, but you can always regain and maintain flexibility with regular stretching. Flexibility is important so that muscles function properly and for range of motion. Stretching improves circulation, helps you maintain better posture, helps relieve stress from tight muscles, improves coordination and balance, and reduces muscle and joint stiffness.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends stretching at least 2 to 3 times per week, working your way up to daily stretching. There are two basic types of stretches – dynamic and static.

Dynamic stretches are slow controlled movements that help warm the body and prepare muscles for moderate and vigorous activity. These should always be done as part of a warm-up for exercise. Examples of dynamic stretching include arm circles, shoulder rolls, hip rotation, and knee lifts.

The best time to do static stretching is just after exercise, when your muscles are warm. Here are tips to perform static stretching safely and comfortably:

- » Hold each stretch for 15 to 30 seconds and repeat the stretch 2 to 4 times.
- » Move to feel a stretch, but not pain.
- » Don't bounce while you stretch.
- » Breathe! Don't hold your breath while you are stretching. Relax and breathe.
- » Stretch both sides to make sure your joint range of motion is as balanced as possible. Focus on stretching major muscle groups such as the hips, glutes, hamstrings, calves, shoulders, back, and chest.

Here are several helpful resources:

Guide to Stretches: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/stretching/art-20546848?s=1>

Farmer Daily Stretching Program: <https://www.uvm.edu/aglabor/dashboard/sites/default/files/uploads/Stretching-Brochure.pdf>



Breath Fresh, Train Smart, Stay Safe!

If you are doing this challenge with coworkers, do you all go for a group walk during breaks? Make sure to plan your route beforehand. As a personal anecdote, I once went for a walk over my 30-minute lunch break, which extended to an hour after a train stopped on the tracks at the only entrance to a park. I should have thought about the potential of getting stuck. (Never ever cross between train cars, it's not worth your life) It's good to know the general safety of the area where you're walking and how far you might be able to go during your break. Build in time so you won't have to rush! By thinking about who you're walking with, where you're going, how traffic will be, and how long you plan to be out, you can get a lovely break from work and get those miles in!

Courtney Nowland,
Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office

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>

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Kansas State University Walk Kansas

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

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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The Power of Greens

A healthful salad bowl is a colorful celebration of wellness. Green leafy vegetables are like nature's multivitamin, packed with vitamin K, folate, iron, vitamin C, calcium, and magnesium.

More than a trend, eating greens is a science-backed approach to improving overall health. Nutrients in green vegetables support nearly every aspect of bodily function including bone health (vitamin K and calcium), production of red blood cells and brain health (folate), muscle and nerve support (magnesium), better immune function and protection from oxidative stress (vitamin C).

The high fiber content of greens also aids in digestion and feeds beneficial gut bacteria. Fiber also helps you maintain healthy blood sugar levels and lower blood cholesterol, which is especially helpful for those at risk for heart disease.

Get the most bang for your bite with dark leafy greens. Choose arugula, spinach, kale, chard, greens (mustard, turnip, collard), bok choy, and romaine. Iceberg lettuce doesn't have enough nutrients for a great-for-you green, but it can fill you up with few calories. It is more than 90% water, so pump it up by mixing in other veggies and darker greens.

Think about ways you can add greens to your diet throughout the day. Add greens to your morning smoothie, spinach or kale to omelets or scrambled eggs, spinach on your sandwich/wrap, enjoy fresh salads, sauté or steam for a side dish, sneak greens into soups, stews, and casseroles.

Enjoy this super green salad. Edamame is a young soybean harvested before it ripens or hardens. They are available shelled, in the pod, fresh, or frozen and have a sweet, nutty flavor.



Super Green Salad

Makes 6 servings

Salad Ingredients:

- 2 cups mixed greens or spinach
- 1 cup frozen shelled edamame, thawed
- ¼ cup frozen green peas, thawed
- 1 cup cucumber, diced
- 1 tablespoon sunflower seeds

Dressing Ingredients:

- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup loosely packed fresh parsley sprigs
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- ½ tablespoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Prepare produce and parsley, and rinse under cold running water. Chop cucumber.
3. Prepare dressing by placing all dressing ingredients in a blender or food processor. Cover and process until smooth.
4. In a large bowl, combine greens, edamame, green peas, and cucumber. Toss to combine.
5. Drizzle the salad with dressing, toss again, and sprinkle with sunflower seeds. (The dressing is very flavorful, so a little goes a long way. Start with 4 tablespoons and adjust to taste.)

Nutrition Information per serving of salad (approximately ¾ cup): 50 calories; 1.5 g total fat (0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 7 g carbohydrates; 1 g total sugars; 3 g protein; 2 g fiber; 10 mg sodium.

Nutrition Information per serving of dressing (approximately 2 tablespoons): 60 calories; 3.5 g total fat (0.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 7 g carbohydrates; 1 g total sugars; 1 g protein; 0 g fiber; 20 mg sodium.