

WALK KANSAS

K-STATE
Research and Extension

ACTIVITY GUIDE

Want to feel better and have more energy?

Maybe you need to blow off some steam from a stressful day or need to get better sleep. Regular exercise can help you achieve this and more. The health benefits from regular exercise and physical activity are hard to ignore, and they are available to everyone, regardless of age, sex, or physical ability. Another fantastic thing about exercise — it's fun!

Walk Kansas is based on *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, which recommend a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week OR 75 minutes of vigorous exercise/week, and strengthening exercises at least 2 days per week. Walk Kansas also promotes a warm-up and cool-down time and stretching to improve flexibility.



Make sure it is safe for you to exercise

Before you begin Walk Kansas, or any exercise program, it is important to make sure it is safe for you to exercise. This PAR-Q (Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire) can help you decide if you are ready or if you might need to check with your physician first. Answer yes or no to the following questions:

1. Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only do physical activity recommended by a doctor?
2. Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity?
3. In the past month, have you had chest pain when you were not doing physical activity?
4. Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness?
5. Do you have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?
6. Is your doctor currently prescribing medications for your blood pressure or heart condition?
7. Do you know of any other reason why you should not do physical activity?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, are older than age 40, and have been inactive or are concerned about your health, check with your physician before taking a fitness test or participating in Walk Kansas.

Measure your fitness

Almost everyone that increases their physical activity will benefit by improved fitness. You may notice that you don't get out of breath as easily when you climb the stairs or that picking something up from the floor is easier. While a pre/post fitness test is not required, you may want to know just how much you improve over the 8 weeks of Walk Kansas. These tests are relatively easy to do. You can do the walking test by yourself and the flexibility tests will require another person to do some measuring.

Rockport Fitness Walking Test

This is one of the best ways to determine your cardiorespiratory fitness, which is the ability of the heart and lungs to supply fuel and oxygen during sustained physical activity. The test determines your fitness level by estimating your VO2Max, which is your maximum possible oxygen consumption.

To do this 1-mile walking test, you will need: a scale to determine your weight, a stopwatch or cell phone to time the test, a 1-mile measured course, and a way to measure your heart rate (take your pulse).

First, find a 1-mile course. For most high-school tracks, this is 4 laps around the innermost lane. You can also measure out 1 mile on a road or street. Have your phone or stopwatch ready and follow these instructions.

1. Warm up at a gentle pace for at least 5 minutes.
2. Walk 1 mile as fast as you can and time how long it takes.
3. Record your time to walk 1 mile.
4. Take your heart rate immediately at the end of your 1-mile walk. You can use a heart rate monitor or app, or take your pulse for 15 seconds and multiply this number by 4. (See directions for taking pulse on page 4.)
5. Enter this data into the calculator linked below. This will determine your VO2Max and compare it to standards for your gender and age group. knightsofknee.com/calculators/FitnessTestCalc.htm

If you do not have access to the Internet, contact your local K-State Research and Extension office for calculation instructions.

Please know that this is not a test you can cram for because fitness doesn't improve overnight. Don't be discouraged if your score is low. The most important thing is that you improve your score over time. We would expect your score to improve after the 8 weeks of Walk Kansas, provided you walk or exercise regularly and that you increase the length and intensity of your walking over time.

My Fitness Test Numbers

BEFORE WALK KANSAS

Walking test

Time for 1-mile walk _____

Heart rate immediately after walk _____

Rockport results

My Fitness Level _____

My Fitness Rating _____

Flexibility Tests

Back Scratch: Right _____ Left _____

Hamstring: Right _____ Left _____

AFTER WALK KANSAS

Walking test

Time for 1-mile walk _____

Heart rate immediately after walk _____

Rockport results

My Fitness Level _____

My Fitness Rating _____

Flexibility Tests

Back Scratch: Right _____ Left _____

Hamstring: Right _____ Left _____

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Walk Kansas:

www.walkkansas.org

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans:

health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/PAG_ExecutiveSummary.pdf

Strength Training:

workshop.agrability.org/2011/Downloads/Vincent_07.pdf

“Don't just sit there!”:

washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/health/sitting/Sitting.pdf

Flexibility and Stretching:

walkkansas.org/doc/stretchingposter.pdf

Source for flexibility tests:

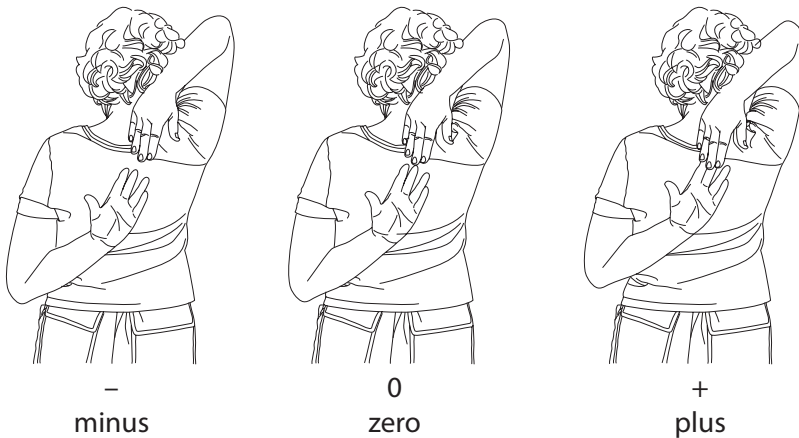
Stay Strong Stay Healthy Program and University of Missouri Extension

k-state.edu/staystrong/

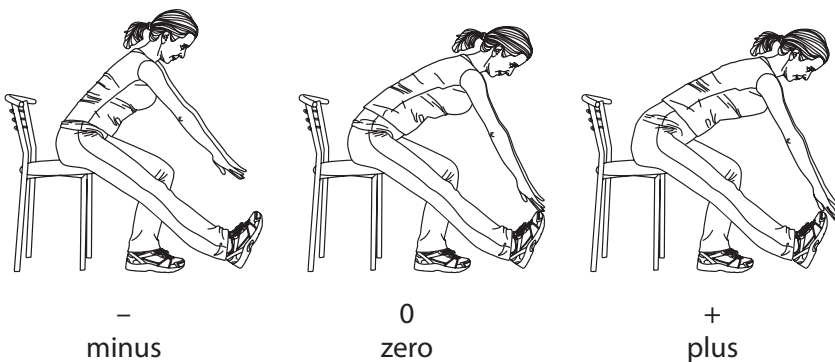
Flexibility Tests

Flexibility is somewhat hard to measure. These two tests are some of the best ways to determine if your flexibility improves over time. You will need a partner to complete these and have a ruler handy.

Back Scratch Test to determine upper body flexibility. Stand and place your right hand over your right shoulder, palm down and fingers extended. Place your other arm around the back of your waist with palm up, reaching as far as possible and trying to touch or overlap extended middle fingers of both hands. Have your partner measure to the closest quarter inch. Use the diagram below as a guide and record your results. Repeat on the other side.



Chair Sit-and-Reach Test to determine lower body (hamstring) flexibility. Sit on the edge of a chair, one leg bent and slightly off to one side, foot flat on the floor. Extend your other leg as straight as possible, heel placed on the floor and foot flexed to 90 degrees. With arms outstretched, hands overlapping and middle fingers even, slowly bend forward and reach as far as possible toward or past the toes. Use the diagram below as a guide and record your results. Repeat on the other side.



Determine Heart Rate by Measuring Your Pulse

As soon as you stop moving your heart rate will slow, so it is important to check your pulse quickly after you complete the 1-mile walk. You can find your pulse at your neck (carotid artery) or wrist (radial artery). Here are the steps:

1. Have a timing device ready, one that shows seconds. You can use a clock or timer with a second hand or use the stopwatch mode on your smartphone.
2. Use two fingers (not your thumb). It is often easiest to find your pulse in the carotid arteries, located either side of your windpipe. Check just beneath your jaw, next to your windpipe.
3. Once you locate your pulse, press lightly and count your pulse for 15 seconds. Multiply this number by 4. Ex: 20 beats for 15 seconds = 80 beats per minute.

Ready for Walk Kansas!

Physicians say that if walking were a pill, it would be the most widely prescribed medication. The reason we promote walking is that almost anyone can do it and it is good for your heart. Other types of exercise are beneficial as well, so you can be assured that other types of activity also count toward Walk Kansas minutes!

Physical activity versus exercise — there is a difference. Physical activity is anything that gets a person moving, such as walking to the mailbox. Exercise is moving at a pace that increases your heart rate, such as walking around the block. Walk Kansas promotes both physical activity and exercise. It is also important to move throughout your day, and especially important that you move — at least stand — for several minutes every waking hour.

What counts toward Walk Kansas minutes?

The Walk Kansas program is based on the Physical Activity Guidelines, which promote moderate and vigorous intensity activities. Here are the types of activity you can report as Walk Kansas minutes.

- Moderate exercise/activity — at a level where you can carry on a conversation, but not sing. Report actual minutes of activity. Activities could include: walking briskly, water exercise, bicycling slower than 10 miles/hour, tennis (doubles), ballroom dancing, general gardening, pickleball.

Vigorous exercise/activity — at a level where you can talk but not have a conversation. **You can double the actual minutes you perform vigorous activity and report that number.** Vigorous activities could include: race-walking, jogging or running, swimming laps, tennis (singles), aerobic dancing, bicycling 10 miles/hour or faster, jumping rope, heavy gardening, hiking uphill or with a heavy backpack.

- Combination of moderate and vigorous — where you add short bursts of vigorous activity or intervals. Example: Add several 30-second bursts of running or fast walking to your moderate walking pace. Report actual minutes of activity.
- Strengthening exercises — report number of days you did strengthening exercises.

If you wear an activity tracker (wrist tracker or pedometer), report the total number of steps per/day in the Walk Kansas system. The system will covert steps to miles (2,000 steps = 1 mile.)

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