



# WALK KANSAS

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

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

## 2024 WEEK TWO



## Why Strength Matters

Walking and other types of aerobic activity provide many health benefits, but they don't make muscles strong. Strength training does. You can feel a difference when your body is stronger. Strengthening exercises also improve balance, coordination, and agility, allowing you to perform everyday movements much easier.

People start losing muscle around age 30, and the rate of muscle loss accelerates around age 50. Some of muscle loss is part of the aging process, but inactivity accounts for the rest. The good news is you can prevent muscle loss and can increase your strength — no matter your age.

There are many benefits from strength training. Strong muscles lead to strong bones and connective tissue, which will help you avoid injuries and improve your balance. Muscle burns more calories than fat, so this is a bonus. Doing strengthening exercises can improve heart health and lower blood pressure, reduce back pain, help you sleep better, and ease symptoms of arthritis and fibromyalgia. Other benefits include improved mood and a boost of confidence!

Do muscle-strengthening activities two to three days a week, with a rest day between. Work all major muscle groups, including the legs, hips, back, stomach, chest, shoulders, and arms. Following are strengthening exercises you can do at home or in a gym:

**Free weights or dumbbells.** These are classic tools used to strengthen your upper body. They are inexpensive and available in many sizes. Start with 2- to 5-pound weights and gradually work up.

**Body weight exercises.** These require little or no equipment since they use your body weight for resistance. Try push-ups, pull-ups, abdominal crunches, lunges, and leg squats.

**Resistance tubing or bands.** These offer weight-like resistance when you pull on them. They are

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inexpensive and good for building strength in arms and other muscles, and they are available in varying degrees of resistance. This is a great resource for strength training with resistance bands. ([https://www.montana.edu/extension/wellness/physical-activity/resistance\\_band.html](https://www.montana.edu/extension/wellness/physical-activity/resistance_band.html))

If you are new to strength training, start slowly. Warm up with 5 to 10 minutes of stretching or walking, and always work both opposing muscle groups, right and left sides.

## Simple Moves for More Strength

One of the best exercises to build strength is the wide-leg squat. It doesn't matter how old you are, your gender, or what your fitness goals are. Everyone can benefit from doing squats. This exercise forces the body's parts to work and grow stronger together as a single unit. Here is a guide:

- 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.

A demonstration of doing squats. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDu8MMr6\\_hU&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDu8MMr6_hU&feature=youtu.be)

A demonstration of squats with dumbbell. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4L0VMnRapA&feature=youtu.be>

When you try a new exercise, invest time in learning the proper form. Once you feel confident with your form, continue to challenge yourself by increasing weight and repetitions. These resources may be helpful:

Walk Kansas Muscle Strengthening Videos: <https://www.walkkansas.org/activity/strength.html>

At Home Beginner Strength Training:

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/video/at-home-workout-beginner-strength-training/>

If you are around age 50 and over, check with your local K-State Research and Extension office to see if they offer Stay Strong Stay Healthy classes. These strength training classes are affordable, accessible, and targeted toward older adults.



## Habit Shift Challenge

Keep a set of hand weights in your office and/or where you watch TV. You can do simple exercises during commercial breaks, while watching a webinar, and even during a meeting on Zoom. Keep the hand weights where you see them easily, which works as a "self-nudge" to remind you to do strengthening exercises.

## Walk Kansas Webinars

April 10: The Science of Happiness

April 17: Foot Care and Shoe Selection

April 24: Habit Shift to Better Health

Time: 12:10 p.m.

Link to join or scan the QR code below:



<https://ksu.zoom.us/j/94021770836>

## Prioritize Protein for Breakfast

Starting your day off with protein comes with a variety of benefits. Combined with high fiber carbohydrates and fat, including protein for breakfast can help keep you feeling full longer, with more stable blood sugar and sustained energy. Protein is also vital for cell repair/maintenance and helps retain muscle mass.

Research shows that most Americans consume the majority of their protein at dinner and the least amount at breakfast. Work towards splitting your protein intake more evenly throughout the day, with similar amounts for each meal. This will help you achieve steadier energy levels throughout the day.

Breakfast with adequate protein can take many forms. While you might think of meat as a main protein source, there are many options. Eggs are nutrient dense and easily digested. They also pair well with many other foods, including whole grain toast, meat proteins, and a variety of vegetables as well as cheese.

Grains can also pack a protein punch, plus they add fiber, variety, and essential nutrients. Oatmeal is a breakfast staple, but don't forget that quinoa can be served exactly the same and offers an even higher protein option.

It is easy to get in a rut and eat similar foods for breakfast each day. This week, work on changing things up first thing in the morning. This spinach frittata combines eggs and veggies. Add a slice of whole-grain toast, fruit, and low-fat milk and you have a great start to your day.

## Spinach Frittata

Makes 8 Servings

### Ingredients:

- 12 large eggs
- ½ cup 2% milk
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup tomatoes, chopped
- 5 cups baby spinach, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup feta cheese
- ½ teaspoon each of dried dill and thyme



### Topping:

- 1 cup tomatoes, chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, diced
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ¼ cup parsley, chopped
- Pinch of ground black pepper and salt

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. Wash hands with soap and water.
3. Prepare produce and rinse under cold running water. Slice and chop vegetables.
4. Crack the eggs in a large bowl; add milk, salt, and pepper; whisk and set aside.
5. Heat oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add onions and cook until softened.
6. Stir in garlic and tomatoes and cook for another minute.
7. Add baby spinach and cook until wilted. Sprinkle with feta cheese and herbs.
8. Pour in the eggs. Using a spatula, gently stir and scrape the bottom of the skillet until large curds form but the eggs are still wet.
9. Smooth the top into an even layer and let it cook for 30 to 45 seconds.
10. Place the skillet and mixture in the oven and bake until the center is no longer jiggly and edges are golden brown, about 8 to 10 minutes.
11. While the frittata is cooking, assemble the topping. Mix all topping ingredients together in a small bowl.
12. Slice frittata into 8 pieces; serve with a spoonful of tomato topping.

### Nutrition Information per serving:

170 calories; 11 g total fat (3.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 6 g carbohydrates; 12 g protein; 2 g fiber; 330 mg sodium; 3 g sugar.

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