



WALK KANSAS

K-STATE
Research and Extension

www.WalkKansas.org

2025 Week Seven



Does Your Body Feel Stiff?

Feeling stiffness in your body is a common complaint, especially as you age. Stiffness can be a result of doing heavy activity that you are not used to, or from being inactive for periods of time. It can also be caused by poor posture or medical conditions.

When you do strengthening exercises or perform heavy labor that you are not used to, your muscles develop tiny tears. This is a normal part of the muscle strengthening process, and you may feel stiff and sore for 1 to 2 days as the body repairs itself.

You can feel stiffness because you have been inactive. Synovial fluid is a thick liquid located between your joints, and when you move around during the day this liquid lubricates your joints. When you stop moving to sleep or when you sit for long periods of time, the fluid doesn't secrete as much to facilitate joint and bone movement.

Here are some ways to prevent and treat feelings of stiffness caused by situations other than a medical condition.

Warm up your muscles before physical activity.

Sometimes, the feeling of stiffness is inevitable and part of the muscle repair process that allows you to get stronger, but a good warm up can certainly help.

Take mobility breaks throughout the day. Set a timer and get up and move for about 5 minutes every hour to help increase the secretions of joint fluid and prevent stiffness.

Continue to be active. Even though heavy exercise can lead to stiffness, it can also help reduce it. Exercise can help reduce inflammation, increase the secretion of synovial fluid to lubricate your joints, and helps build muscles that support good posture.

Take recovery days when you need to. Try light cardio activities like swimming or walking.

Stretch and increase mobility. Any stretching can be beneficial and stretches should be done every day. Stretching is most beneficial when muscles are already warm, so make sure you do some type of warm up activity first.

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Blue Zones Lifestyle

It is common to think that health and longevity are genetic traits. While genes do determine 20 to 24% of your overall health quality, lifestyle habits and the environment have a much greater influence on how well or long you live. This is great news, since you have some control over your environment and habits.

What do long-lived people have in common with one another? Scientists have determined that it is not education, income, or profession. Dan Buettner, a National Geographic Fellow and multiple New York Times bestselling author, was able to pinpoint longevity hotspots around the world and identified them as Blue Zones®, reflecting the lifestyle and environment of the world's longest-lived people. The five blue zones include:

Okinawa, Japan — where females over 70 are the longest-lived population in the world.

Loma Linda, California — Seventh Day Adventists view health as central to their faith. They live almost a decade longer than other Americans.

Ikaria, Greece — where residents have half the rate of heart disease as Americans and almost no dementia.

Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica — where elders have a strong reason to live and a positive outlook, which helps keep them active; also, the world's lowest rates of middle age mortality.










Sardinia, Italy — home to the world's longest living men. They follow a very traditional healthy lifestyle.

Buettner and his research team discovered that the blue zones areas of the world share and benefit from a set of habits that we call the Power 9 — practices that, together, increase longevity, health, and happiness. These are highlighted below and will be explored further during the last Walk Kansas webinar on May 14.

Source: www.bluezones.com

POWER 9®

Nine healthy lifestyle habits shared by people who have lived the longest.

								
DOWN SHIFT	PURPOSE	PLANT SLANT	WINE @ 5	FAMILY FIRST	80% RULE	MOVE NATURALLY	RIGHT TRIBE	BELONG
Improve your overall wellness by finding a stress relieving strategy that works for you.	Wake up with purpose each day to add up to 7 years to your life.	Put less meat and more plants on your plate.	Responsibly enjoy a glass of wine with good friends each day.	Invest in spending time with family and add up to 6 years to your life.	Eat mindfully and stop when 80% full.	Find ways to move more! You'll burn calories without thinking about it.	Surround yourself with people who support positive behaviors.	Belong to a faith-based community and attend services 4 times a month to add 4 – 14 years to your lifespan.



Breathe Fresh, Train Smart, Stay Safe!

Walking when the sun is coming up or going down can pose extra safety risks. Visibility is often reduced for drivers, and the sun on the horizon can be blinding. If you are walking around these times of day, be more aware and make sure you face oncoming traffic so you can see what is coming. Walk in well lit and populated areas and wear reflective or light clothing. A headlamp can be helpful when it's dark and it makes you more visible. Before going for a walk, let someone know where you are going, when you'll be home, and carry your phone with you.

Courtney Nowland,
Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office

Walk Kansas Webinars

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>

Med Instead of Meds

The Mediterranean style of eating is one of the healthiest in the world. It includes lots of fruits and vegetables, healthful fats like olive and canola oil, whole grains, fish, seafood, herbs and spices, and some lean meat.

This style of eating is not about cutting calories and restricting certain foods, as many popular diet trends in America today emphasize. The Med Way is a way of life that includes enjoying a wide variety of whole, nourishing foods with friends and family, and practicing an active lifestyle. Eating the Med Way doesn't have to be expensive or complicated, and you don't have to buy only fresh fruits and vegetables — canned and frozen will work and they are all good.

Studies show that eating and living the Med Way can reduce your risk of developing certain diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer. Other benefits include lower blood pressure and weight loss, and improved eye health by protecting against macular degeneration. A Med eating style can also help you manage your blood pressure and decrease your risk of developing type 2 diabetes by as much as 52%.

Med Instead of Meds, medinsteadofmeds.com, is a great resource to learn more about eating the Med way. You will also see a series of recorded webinars in the "Resources" section of your Walk Kansas portal. These were provided several years ago through Walk Kansas. Learn more about the Med way of eating and give some of the recipes a try! Here is a tool to get you started: medinsteadofmeds.com/wp-content/themes/understrap-child-mim/downloads/handouts/MediterraneanDiet-Handout-2023_Screen.pdf

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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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Strawberry Quinoa Salad

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

Dressing

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

2 tablespoons olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Salad

½ cup dry quinoa

2 cups baby spinach leaves, chiffonade*

2 cups arugula

2/3 cup sliced strawberries

2 tablespoons sliced almonds, toasted

1 handful of fresh basil leaves, chiffonade*

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Prepare greens and strawberries by rinsing under cold running water. Drain the greens and place in a salad spinner to remove any excess moisture.
3. Place one cup of water in a medium pot and add quinoa. Bring to a boil, cover, and reduce the heat. Simmer for 15 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and let it sit, uncovered, for 10 minutes.
4. Make the dressing by combining all ingredients in a bowl or jar.
5. Place the quinoa, spinach, arugula, strawberries, toasted almonds, and basil in a bowl and combine.
6. Just before serving, add dressing and toss.

*Video on how to chiffonade: youtube.com/watch?v=g0OdQiTBPGs

Nutrition Information per 1 cup serving: 182 calories; 10 g total fat (1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 18 g carbohydrates; 5 g protein; 3 g fiber; 33 mg sodium.

