

2026 Week One



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Welcome to Walk Kansas 2026!

Spring in Kansas is a perfect time to get outside, reconnect with friends and coworkers, and focus on your health. That's exactly what Walk Kansas is all about. We're excited to welcome you to the 2026 Walk Kansas program, an eight-week journey toward better habits and a more active lifestyle.

Walk Kansas is a team-based wellness program offered through Kansas State University Extension. Each year, thousands of Kansans come together (virtually) to improve their overall well-being. Whether you're a returning participant or joining us for the first time, we're glad you're here!

You don't have to be a runner or fitness enthusiast to succeed in Walk Kansas. While walking or rolling is a great starting point, many other activities count toward your weekly minutes, including gardening, team sports, and strengthening exercises. Learn more about what counts as activity minutes on page 4 of the [Walk Kansas Activity Guide \(walkkansas.org/doc/participant/WK.Activity.Guide.26.pdf\)](http://walkkansas.org/doc/participant/WK.Activity.Guide.26.pdf).

Walk Kansas is about more than steps. Throughout the 8 weeks, you'll receive weekly newsletters and educational resources. This year's program brings a focus on workplace wellness with tips that easily adapt to home life as well. Topics like energizing your (work) day, improving posture, making healthier food choices, building strength, managing stress and anxiety — these apply to all of us.

As you and your team travel across and around Kansas on one of the virtual trails, you'll discover vibrant small towns and scenic landscapes. Be sure to check waypoints you pass through on the map in your online portal. Discover the places and communities that make Kansas special.

As you begin your Walk Kansas journey, set a personal goal for the eight weeks. Encourage your teammates or others you know to work toward similar goals. Try new activities and walking routes, take advantage of

the educational webinars and resources provided, and celebrate progress, both big and small.

Thank you for being part of Walk Kansas 2026. Start with an activity you enjoy, lace up your shoes, stay connected with your team, and let's go!!

Sharolyn Flaming Jackson, MS

State Walk Kansas Coordinator; Family and Consumer Sciences Specialist, K-State Extension



Walk Kansas Learning Lounge

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

April 1: Energize Your Workday: Movement and Nature for Focus and Vitality

April 15: Wiggle While You Work

April 29: Good Gut Health

May 6: Kindness at Work



Link to join or scan the QR code:
<https://ksu.zoom.us/j/92803723573>

Getting Started

Every activity session should include a warm-up, a conditioning phase, and a cool-down. When pressed for time, many often skip the warm-up and cool-down phases, but these are crucial for keeping your body injury free and they help improve flexibility.

The warm-up helps your body adjust from rest to exercise. Take 5 to 10 minutes for light activity, like leisurely walking, to increase your body temperature and gradually increase blood flow, heart rate, and breathing. You can include some stretching like arm circles, shoulder rolls, and knee lifts.

The conditioning phase follows the warm-up, and this is where you monitor the intensity, or how hard you are exercising. Strive for moderate intensity, working hard enough so you can just barely carry on a conversation. The **Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans** (odphp.health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/PAG_ExecutiveSummary.pdf) recommend a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. If you exercise at vigorous intensity (where you can only say a few words while you exercise), you can get similar benefits with 75 minutes of activity per week.

Just as important as the warm-up is a cool down after exercise. Take a few minutes to slow your walking or activity pace and allow your breathing to return to normal. After the cool-down, your warm muscles are ready for stretching. This is the best time to do static stretching, where you hold a stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Do upper and lower body stretches. Never stretch to the point of pain, just slight discomfort. Stay relaxed as you stretch, breathe in and out slowly, and don't hold your breath.

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Kansas State University Walk Kansas

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

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Eat the Med Way

The Mediterranean way of eating is one of the healthiest in the world. Studies show that eating and living the Med Way can reduce your risk of developing certain diseases and some types of cancer. It protects small blood vessels in the brain, resulting in up to 40% lower risk of developing Alzheimer's. Eating the Med Way can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease by as much as 30 to 60%. Other benefits include lower blood pressure and weight loss, and improved eye health by protecting against macular degeneration.

Eating the Med Way includes lots of fruits and vegetables (fresh, canned, and frozen), healthful fats like olive and canola oil, whole grains, fish, seafood, herbs and spices, and some lean meat.

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. Here are some tips to get you started eating the Med Way:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables — at least 5 cups per day.
- Choose whole grains often — switch to whole grain bread, cereal, and pasta.
- Use healthful fats. Instead of butter, try olive or canola oil. Choose olive oil spread instead of butter, and olive oil mayonnaise.
- Reduce red meat and eat more fish, poultry, and beans.
- Eat seafood at least 3 times per week.
- Have some dairy, such as low-fat Greek or plain yogurt and small portions of a variety of cheeses.
- Boost flavor with herbs and spices, and use less salt.



Mediterranean Chicken Bake

Makes 4 Servings

Ingredients:

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (16 ounces total)

Marinade:

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon lemon juice

2 teaspoons dried oregano

2 teaspoons garlic powder

For the bake:

2 cups cherry tomatoes

1 zucchini, sliced

1 red onion, sliced

1 bell pepper, sliced

¼ cup Kalamata olives, pitted and halved

¼ cup feta cheese, crumbled

Fresh parsley for garnish

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat oven to 400° F; lightly grease a 9 x 11" baking dish with olive oil.
3. In a large bowl, combine olive oil, lemon juice, oregano, and garlic powder. Add the chicken breasts and coat them evenly with the marinade.
4. Prepare produce and rinse under cold running water. Slice zucchini, red onion, and bell pepper into approximately ½ inch slices. Leave cherry tomatoes whole.
5. Place the marinated chicken breasts in the baking dish and surround them with cherry tomatoes, sliced vegetables, and kalamata olives. Sprinkle the crumbled feta cheese over the top of the chicken and vegetables.
6. Cover the baking dish with aluminum foil and bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for an additional 10 to 15 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the chicken is 165° F.
7. Remove from the oven and let rest for several minutes.
8. Garnish with fresh parsley before serving.

Nutrition Information per serving:

313 calories; 16 g total fat (4 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 14 g carbohydrates; 5 g sugar; 28 g protein; 4 g fiber; 378 mg sodium.