K-STATE Research and Extension

Walk Kansas

Celebrate healthy living newsletter

Week 7 | 2019

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Golden Prairie Extension District
WaKeeney - 785-743-6361
Grainfield - 785-673-4805
Oakley - 785-671-3245
Kathy Katt - kakatt@ksu.edu

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This newsletter 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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Physical Activity for Weight Management

Getting regular physical activity is a key component in helping you maintain a healthful weight. While Walk Kansas is not a weight loss program, many participants report that they lose weight after the 8-week program.

In general, the most effective way to lose weight is to reduce the number of calories you eat.

Physical activity helps you maintain a healthy weight and is essential for healthy aging. Studies show that physical activity can also help you prevent gaining back any weight you have lost.

Here are several ways that physical activity helps with weight maintenance and healthy aging.

1. **Maintaining muscle mass.** Around age 25 to 30 you begin to lose muscle, and the rate of muscle loss accelerates around age 50. Some muscle loss is part of the aging process, but inactivity accounts for the rest. When lean muscle disappears, your metabolism slows down. Exercise can help maintain your muscles and keep your metabolism higher.
2. **Muscle building and repair.** Any type of exercise will tire your muscles. Strengthening exercises, in particular, will cause microscopic tears in your muscles that your body has to repair so the muscles can get stronger. This process of repairing and building muscle helps you burn more calories.
3. **Helps improve lifestyle choices.** Regular exercise helps to reduce stress, improves your ability to think more clearly, helps you get better sleep, and makes you feel good.

Practicing healthful lifestyle habits can also cut your risk for developing chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. If you already have chronic health conditions, regular exercise and maintaining a healthy weight can help you manage your illness more effectively.

As you continue to set goals for your health, focus on the changes you want to make in your habits and lifestyle.

Make a Power Bowl

One way to eat more healthfully is to create a power bowl, which is literally throwing a number of things into a bowl for a quick nutritious meal. Power bowls are a good way to use up small amounts of leftovers from previous meals. The example in the recipe uses leftover grilled beef slider patties plus rice and a variety of produce. You could easily substitute ingredients like chicken or fish and other veggies to change the flavor.

Here is a quick guide for building a power bowl:

Grains — These can be the base or a topping. Choose brown rice, quinoa, pasta, or any grain you like and have on hand. Measure out a ½ cup serving to keep portion size in check. Since brown rice takes a while to cook, make a batch and then freeze it in small bags so it is ready to go. Or, you can use instant brown rice for healthy quick fix.

Produce — All veggies and fruits are game. They can be fresh, frozen, canned, or left over from a previous meal. Include leafy greens as well. Produce should make up at least half of your bowl.

Protein — There is quite a variety to choose from including eggs, fish, chicken, turkey, lean beef, pork, veggie burgers and other vegetable protein options, and more. Beans and lentils are an excellent ingredient for a bowl meal. Choose from black beans, garbanzo and kidney beans, peas, edamame, and more. This is a good way to use leftover beans from a previous meal.

Toppings — Nuts and seeds (cashews, pine nuts, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, and more) add crunch and flavor. Add avocado, salsa, hummus, lemon juice, or any type of sauce for flavor.

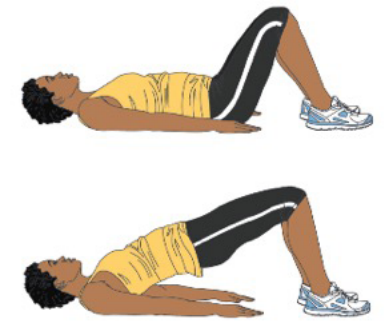
Building Core Strength

Your core includes muscles in your pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen – the muscles that hold you upright. When you strengthen your core muscles, you can improve balance and stability, which is helpful if you are playing sports or doing daily activities.

When you have strong core muscles you may find it is easier to do many things, such as swing a golf club, carry a basket of laundry, get a glass from the top shelf and bend down to tie your shoes. Strengthening this group of muscles can help improve back pain and help you have better posture.

It is so important to include core strengthening activities and there are a variety of exercises to choose from. In addition to sit-ups, pushups, and abdominal crunches, consider adding exercises with a fitness ball or medicine ball (also referred to as a med ball) and doing some variation of planks. A collection of how-to videos at http://www.walkkansas.org/activity/strength.html is a great resource. Here you will find several instructional videos on how to do a plank correctly and variations of the exercise, as well as a med ball slam and several exercises with a fitness ball.

The Lying Hip Bridge is a classic core exercise that is done while lying on the floor. Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms down. Bend your knees to a 45°-angle and place your feet flat on the floor hip distance apart. Raise your hips and lift your buttocks and lower back off the floor. Squeeze the back of your legs, buttocks, and core to create a straight line from your knees to shoulders. Make sure your back is straight, not arched. Press your shoulder blades into the ground and don't hold your breath. Pause at the top, then slowly lower yourself back to the floor.



You can make this move more challenging by doing it with a fitness ball as demonstrated in this Glute Bridge variation.

Abdominal Twist - Stretch

This is a good cool down stretch for your trunk and back. Sit tall with a straight back on a steady chair. Rotate to one side of the body and hold the stretch for 15 seconds. Relax and come back to neutral, with head and upper body facing forward. Repeat in opposite direction. Complete twice for each direction. Make sure you do not twist beyond comfort.

Are You Getting Enough Protein?

Everyone needs protein in their diet, and most people are getting enough. Protein-rich foods are essential for many functions of the body, including repair, maintenance, and immune function. Your muscles are primarily protein, and dietary protein helps maintain healthy organs, bones, joints, skin, hair, and blood cells.

Most people ages 9 and older need 5 to 7 ounces of protein foods each day. Visually, this amount is about the size of two decks of playing cards. So yes, most people are getting enough; however, they may not be getting much variety in their protein-rich food choices. As you consider options for including protein in your daily meals, consider foods from all of these categories: cooked dry beans and peas, dairy products, eggs, finfish and shellfish, nuts and seeds, poultry, and red meats. Within these categories, choose options that are lower in saturated fats, including lean cuts of meats and poultry without skin; in addition, limit processed meats/foods and high-fat dairy options.

Grains and vegetables contain protein as well, but in lower amounts. Quinoa is a grain that is an ideal source of protein with 4 grams in ½ cup. It also supplies all the essential amino acids, making it an excellent protein choice.

The group most at risk for not getting enough protein is older adults. They may benefit from more protein-rich foods in their diet to help maintain their weight, reduce muscle loss, and maintain their overall health. Pregnant and breastfeeding women should eat an extra 6 to 8 grams of protein each day, and those who are not eating enough calories are likely at risk for not getting enough protein.

If you have a specific health condition, such as kidney disease or diabetes, you should talk with your health care provider about how much protein to eat.

Teriyaki Burger Bowl

Makes 1 serving

Ingredients:

¼ cup pineapple tidbits packed in juice (not drained)
2 tablespoons low-sodium teriyaki marinade or sauce
2 teaspoons olive or canola oil
6 fresh asparagus spears,
1 cup fresh vegetables (shredded carrots, sliced red onion, chopped bell pepper)
½ to 1 cup dark leafy greens, washed and dried
½ cup cooked brown rice
1 cooked lean beef patty, approximately 3 ounces
1 tablespoon sliced green onions
Sesame seeds, optional

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water. Wash vegetables by gently rubbing them under cold running water. Break off the woody ends of asparagus by gently bending it until the stalk end will easily break.
2. To make the sauce, drain the juice from the pineapple into a small bowl (reserve pineapple). Add teriyaki marinade/sauce, stir, and save for later.
3. Heat oil in a medium sized skillet on medium-high heat. Add asparagus and vegetables and cook for several minutes, stirring continuously. Remove skillet from heat.
4. Warm rice and cooked beef patty in a microwave oven on medium power. Make sure that the beef patty reaches an internal temperature of 165°F. If desired, warm the sauce as well.
5. Assemble your bowl by spreading the rice on the bottom; lay the asparagus down the middle of the bowl; arrange vegetables on one side and leafy greens on the other. Add the beef patty and top with pineapple. Drizzle sauce over the bowl and sprinkle green onions and sesame seeds (if desired) on top.

Nutrition Information per serving:

470 calories; 19 g fat (0 g trans fat, 5 g saturated fat); 49 g carbohydrates 30 g protein; 8 g fiber; 730 mg sodium