

## Walk this Way

Do you remember the song with the lyrics, “Walk this Way” by Aerosmith? Since the song had nothing to do with walking technique, let me share reminders.

As you begin a walking program, pay attention to your walking technique, and use your arms to power forward and increase your pace. Start by checking your posture — you should be able to draw a straight line from your ear down to your shoulder, to your hip, knee, and ankle. Tighten your stomach muscles and tuck your pelvis under your torso.

When walking, move your shoulders naturally and freely, and avoid drawing your shoulders toward your ears. Swing your arms with each step, and bend arms at the elbow. This will help you burn more calories, increase your upper body strength, and it also helps to reduce swelling, tingling and numbness of the fingers or hands. Pump your arms to increase your walking speed and to help you walk up hills.

Your stride should feel natural. Land on your heels and then roll forward to push off with your toes. After you walk leisurely for a few minutes to warm up, increase your pace until you are working at the intensity where you can just barely talk.

During any type of physical activity, watch for signs of overexertion. If you feel pain or pressure in your chest, abdomen, neck, jaw, or arms, stop exercising immediately and see your physician. Do the same if you experience nausea or vomiting, dizziness or fainting, extreme fatigue, excessive shortness of breath, or if your recovery from exercise is very slow. These are warning signs you should not ignore.

Walking is an activity that is appropriate for almost everyone. Your muscles should burn a little when walking, and you should feel a bit sore a few days after doing strengthening exercises. You know you’ve done too much if soreness prevents you from performing daily activities or if excessive soreness lasts three days or more after exercise.

Remember to hydrate. Water is the best way to hydrate during and after exercise. The easiest way to tell if you are dehydrated is by the color of your urine. It should be light yellow or clear within a couple of hours after exercise. If it is dark yellow, you need more hydration.

After exercise, have a snack that contains carbohydrates and protein. Good choices include yogurt and almonds, peanut butter with a banana, rice cakes, or whole-wheat pretzels. Eating the right foods after exercise will improve your energy level and help with recovery so you are ready to take a walk!

*Source: Sharolyn Flaming Jackson, Extension Specialist – Family and Consumer Sciences, K-State Research and Extension, Walk Kansas Newsletter*

**K-State Research and Extension Events - call 620.221.5450 to register.**

**March 19 - Grant Writing Workshop - Cowley College, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (registration fee \$30)**

**March 24, 31, April 7 & 14** - Dining with Diabetes Class series, Winfield Public Library, 5:30-7:30 p.m. (registration fee \$25)

**April 4** - Mental Health First Aid, Cowley County Courthouse, Winfield, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. (registration fee \$35)

Scholarships available for all programs.

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