

# Celebrate

## healthy living

2018 Week 6

### Getting Past a Bad Week

Everyone has them. You miss your regular walk or scheduled exercise time once or twice, which turns into a week or longer. Relapse from exercise is common and it will happen to everyone at some point. The sooner you can turn things around the better.

When you have a bad week or find yourself off track with exercise, or any healthful lifestyle habit, take some time to refocus. Think about the benefits you noticed when you were practicing these healthful habits. Did you have more energy, was it easier to walk upstairs or uphill, did you get better sleep, or did you lose weight/inches? Remind yourself of the benefits you experienced from regular physical activity and other lifestyle choices.

Now, examine the obstacles that got in the way of practicing these habits. A barrier to being active outdoors, in Kansas, is often the weather. While everyone is ready for spring weather, develop a strategy to continue walking and doing other exercise when the outdoor climate is not perfect. Other common barriers include lack of time, work schedule, no social or family support, family responsibilities, holidays, sickness, and boredom. Identify one or two barriers that are most significant for you.

Find your “secret sauce” — a strategy that works for you. Hearing about what works for other people can help you figure things out, but it is not likely that it will work exactly the same for you. Create an action plan that takes into account the barriers you just identified. Your action plan should focus on one week at a time and should answer these questions: What? How much? When? How often? The final step of this plan is to ask yourself how confident you are that you will fulfill this contract. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents little confidence and 10 represents total confidence, your plan should rank at least a 7. If your confidence level is lower, adjust your plan so you have a reasonable chance of being successful.

Finally, don't get caught up in an “all or nothing” mindset. When it comes to exercise, doing something is better than doing nothing at all — and doing something will likely lead to doing more in the future!

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## 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.



## Healthful Mexican Food Choices

Cinco de Mayo celebrations feature foods with a Mexican influence. The popularity of these flavors, foods, and beverages have surged, making it one of the most popular ethnic cuisines in America — a very close second to Chinese cuisine. While many people enjoy eating at Mexican restaurants, they also prepare these foods at home.

You can make healthful choices when eating Mexican food at a restaurant, banquet buffet, or when preparing it at home. Be aware that some of these foods will be a trap for calories, fat, and sodium. Fried tortilla chips and crispy salad bowls, high-fat meats, cheese, sour cream, refried beans, and deep-fried combo dishes are common, as are a variety of healthful alternatives.

First, monitor your portions. Most meals at a Mexican restaurant start with chips and salsa. Consider salsa a free food, and limit the chips. Put a handful of chips onto your plate or napkin and don't reach for more. Guacamole is rich in healthful fats; however, it is still best to enjoy in small portions. Ask for topping on the side and request low-fat or fat-free sour cream when available.

Another strategy to limit portion sizes is to pack half of your meal in a to-go container when served and enjoy as "planned-overs" the next day. Ordering from the a la carte menu will allow you to control portion

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sizes somewhat. Try a soft-shell chicken taco with a side of black beans. Items on the menu that get a green light include fajitas, taco salad (without the fried shell), grilled seafood or lean meat/poultry entrées, and dishes that include plenty of fresh vegetables.

Beans are loaded with fiber, protein, and complex carbohydrates, and they are low in calories. Choose a side of black beans or pinto beans as an alternative to refried beans. If you love refried beans, buy the fat-free version in the grocery store and enjoy them with meals at home.

Mexican inspired food is even more appealing when boosted with fresh flavors. Add extra salsa, freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice, jalapeño pepper, fresh cilantro, and other herbs.

### Enjoy Salsa

Salsa, which is a Spanish word for sauce, has replaced ketchup as the most popular condiment in the world! Today, there are many salsa styles and flavors. Tomato-based salsa is considered the traditional variety. Others gaining popularity include fruit salsas, often with a base of mango, pineapple, and peaches, and vegetable salsas based on corn and black beans.

This corn and black bean salsa has been served at many Walk Kansas events and celebrations. It makes a healthful snack or appetizer, and it can be served on a bed of greens as a salad. While called a “salsa” it is more than a sauce and the beans and vegetables provide protein, fiber, and other nutrients. Enjoy this Walk Kansas tradition!



## Corn and Black Bean Salsa

*Makes 10 servings*

### Ingredients:

- 1 15.5-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 cups frozen corn
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- ¼ cup green onion, chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- 1½ tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
- 1 to 2 teaspoons ground cumin (according to your taste)
- 1½ cups chopped tomatoes
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients except tomatoes. Chill for 2 hours.
2. Add tomatoes and serve.

### Nutrition Information per ½-cup serving:

80 calories  
2.5 g fat (0 g saturated fat; 0 g trans fat);  
13 g carbohydrates  
4 g protein  
4 g fiber  
60 mg sodium

