

Celebrate

healthy living

2018 Week 8

How Long Does it Take to Lose Fitness?

Congratulations on completing Walk Kansas! If you have been walking or doing some other type of aerobic activity, and adding strengthening and/or stretching exercises at least twice a week, you probably have noticed that many of your daily activities are easier, that you have more stamina and endurance, and you feel stronger.

So, what happens if you hit the “pause” button on your daily activity? It depends. Most participants in this program likely fall into the category of a recreational exerciser and it would take 2 to 4 weeks of inactivity before you see real change in your fitness level.

If you stop exercising, the first change you will notice is a decline in your aerobic fitness. You’ll notice that you get out of breath more quickly when climbing stairs or walking longer distances. While cardio conditioning falls faster than strength, it is easier to regain. It is also important to remember that taking time off from exercise once in a while can be a good thing, and a good exercise routine includes rest days.

The effect of inactivity on your muscle strength and endurance will be slight during the first few weeks. After that, your muscles will not feel as firm and you will notice a decline in muscle strength. The effect inactivity has on your waistline is based on input and output. When you exercise, you burn more calories. If you stop being active, you will need to reduce calories to avoid weight gain.



Other factors play a role in how quickly you lose health benefits after you stop exercising. When comparing adults who were either 20 to 30 years old or 65 to 75 years old, the older adults lost fitness gains almost twice as fast as the younger set. The good news is that if you have fallen out of your routine, you can regain fitness and health benefits simply by being active again!

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Coming next year:

Walk Kansas 2019 —
March 17 to May 11



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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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Fitness, continued

The Walk Kansas program is designed to be a catalyst for change — to nudge you to be more active for at least 8 weeks. Hopefully, you have experienced how much better you feel when you are more active every day. This feeling of improved health is called “intrinsic” motivation. Because you feel better, you are motivated to continue a more active lifestyle. Your motivation to be active is internal (how you feel) rather than external (motivated by prizes or things). Internal motivation is much more powerful, and the lifestyle changes you make as a result will last longer.

As always, we welcome your thoughts and suggestions on how we can make Walk Kansas better. Please complete this [online](#) survey or ask your local extension office for a paper version to provide your responses. We are already planning for 2019, and your timely response is important to us. Also, if you did the flexibility and walking tests before Walk Kansas (as described in the Activity Guide), please do those same tests again so you can compare the pre and post results.

Have a wonderful summer — be active and be well!

Sharolyn Flaming Jackson
Family and Consumer Sciences Specialist
State Walk Kansas Coordinator

Health Quest Credit for Walk Kansas

If you have the state employee health plan (SEHP) benefits, you are eligible to receive Health Quest rewards for participating in Walk Kansas. This program is considered a “Wellness Challenge” and worth four Health Quest credits. Please provide the requested information [here](#) before June 12.

Please contact Sharolyn Jackson, sharolyn@ksu.edu, 785-532-2273, if you have any questions.

Make Water Your Beverage of Choice

Water is considered the best beverage of choice because it is easy to acquire, relatively inexpensive, and it is free of calories. It is a natural thirst quencher and so good for our bodies!

Water helps to regulate a normal body temperature, lubricate and cushion joints, it protects the spinal cord and other sensitive tissues, and it helps our bodies get rid of waste through urination, perspiration, and bowel movements. Here are some tips to help you make water your go-to beverage.

Acquire a taste for water. The more often you choose water over other beverages, the better it will taste. Think of sweet beverages as “candy drinks” and enjoy them occasionally. Know that when you choose water over sugar-sweetened soda, you are saving about 240 calories per/20 ounces of soda. Not all water tastes the same, either, so try water from different sources and at different temperatures. Water that has been infused with fruits or vegetables and herbs is so refreshing. Try some of these combinations on the second page of [this past Walk Kansas newsletter](#).

Always order water with your meal and drink before you eat. Your mind doesn’t always know whether you are hungry or just need a drink of water. Drinking a moderate amount of water before a meal or snack may suppress your appetite. In fact, studies show that water drinkers ate 75 to 90 fewer calories per meal.

Create a morning “water” ritual. Fill a water bottle and take it with you so you start your day drinking water. Wash the water bottle daily with soap and water and let it air dry. If you don’t have a sink handy at work, store the water bottle in a refrigerator at the end of the day so germs won’t grow overnight. Water bottles should be sanitized once a week with a solution of 1 teaspoon bleach in a quart of water.

Know the signs of dehydration. Your body loses water every day. When the amount of water lost is greater than the amount of water you take in through drinking and eating, your body becomes out of balance — a condition called dehydration. Thirst is not the most reliable gauge of your body’s need for water. The color of your urine is a better indicator. Clear or light-colored urine is a sign you are well hydrated. Dark yellow or amber color is a sign of dehydration. Other signs include headaches, tiredness, dry mouth, dry skin, constipation, and feeling lightheaded.

Animals can also experience dehydration. When you walk your dog, take extra water along so your pet can have a drink, too. Excessive panting, slowed pace, sunken and dry eyes, and dry mouth, gums, and nose are signs your dog may be dehydrated.

Is the DASH Diet Right for You?

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is typically recommended for people with hypertension. In reality, it is a healthy plan that is designed for the entire family. In addition to being a low salt (low sodium) plan, the DASH diet is rich in fruits and vegetables, and low-fat or non-fat dairy, with whole grains. It is a high fiber, low-to-moderate fat eating plan, rich in potassium, calcium, and magnesium.

For the eighth year in a row, US News & World Report has ranked the DASH diet as the best diet. A panel of experts (physicians) chose DASH because it is proven to improve health, has a balance of healthful food groups, and it works. Positive outcomes from following the DASH diet include lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and an

association with a lower risk of several types of cancer, heart disease, stroke, heart failure, kidney stones, and reduced risk of developing diabetes. It can also slow the progression of kidney disease and is now associated with reduced risk of depression.

Resources on the DASH eating plan are available on a variety of places online. Here is a good overview: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan>.



Refrigerator Pickles

Makes 4 cups brine, 14 pickle spears

Try this brine with other vegetables as well, such as bell pepper slices, onion slices, asparagus spears, or carrot sticks.

You can also make a *Giardiniera*, which means “gardener” in Italian. It is a mixture of pickled vegetables, such as onions, carrots, cauliflower, zucchini, and celery plus fresh herbs such as basil, oregano, and thyme. For the *Giardiniera*, use red wine vinegar in place of white vinegar.

Ingredients for the brine:

- 1½ cups distilled white vinegar
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- 4 teaspoons salt
- 2 cups water
- 8 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 tablespoons coriander seeds
- 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
- 2 teaspoons mustard seeds
- Pinch of red pepper flakes

Ingredients for the pickles:

- ½ medium cucumber (8 inches), cut crosswise into rounds or lengthwise into 6 wedges
- 2 small zucchini (6 to 8 inches), but cut lengthwise into quarters
- 6 sprigs fresh dill
- (You can use only cucumber if you prefer)

Directions:

1. Shake vinegar, sugar, and salt for the brine in a sealed 1-quart container, like a jar, until sugar and salt dissolve. Add water, garlic, coriander seeds, peppercorns, mustard seeds, and pepper flakes.
2. Divide most of the brine among smaller jars. Place cucumber, zucchini, and dill in jars and top off with remaining brine; close tightly with lids and refrigerate 1 day to develop flavor. Pickles will keep in the refrigerator up to 1 week.
3. **Note: These “quick” pickles are not preserved and must be refrigerated to avoid food-borne illness.**

Nutrition Information for 3 pickle wedges:

11 calories; 0 g fat (0 g saturated fat, 0 trans fat); 2 g carbohydrates; 1 g protein; 1 g fiber; 36 mg sodium

Compare one serving of these refrigerator pickles (36 mg sodium) to a serving of regular dill pickles at 785 mg of sodium.

