



# WALK KANSAS

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

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2024 WEEK THREE



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## Sleep is a Superpower

A lot happens while you are sleeping. Inadequate sleep directly affects your relationships, life expectancy, libido, cardiovascular health, immune system, and contributes to weight gain.

Sleep is magical for our bodies. Recently, Michelle Lane, RN, MSN, CMSRN, CHC, NE-BC, Senior Director, Community Wellness and Corporate Health at North Kansas City Hospital, presented a webinar for the K-State Research and Extension "Living Well Wednesday" series on this topic. She discussed what happens when you don't get enough sleep, tips to improve sleep, and offered ways to change your thought process about sleep so you can elevate your life through getting enough sleep.

Here are science-based ways to increase sleep and improve quality sleep:

1. Keep a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, including weekdays and weekends.
2. Drop the temperature. To initiate the sleep cycle, you need to drop your core body temperature 1 to 3 degrees. The ideal room temperature for sleep is 65 to 67 degrees F.
3. Sleep in a dark room. Reduce light exposure at least 30 minutes before going to bed.
4. Avoid blue light before bedtime. Do you reach for an electronic device or watch television just before going to bed? Blue light messes with your body's ability to prepare for sleep.
5. Get some exercise! The good news is that just 10 minutes of exercise per day will impact your sleep in a positive way.
6. Use your bed only for sleeping or love making. Don't read or watch television in bed.

Watch the webinar ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjW0\\_HGq\\_mY&t=11s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjW0_HGq_mY&t=11s)) and learn more about the fascinating way your brain works and how sleep provides a literal brain washing every night.

# Walking Technique and Posture

You have probably been told to “stand up straight” at some point in your life. This timeless advice is worth heeding, as good posture supports good health and helps your body function the way it should.

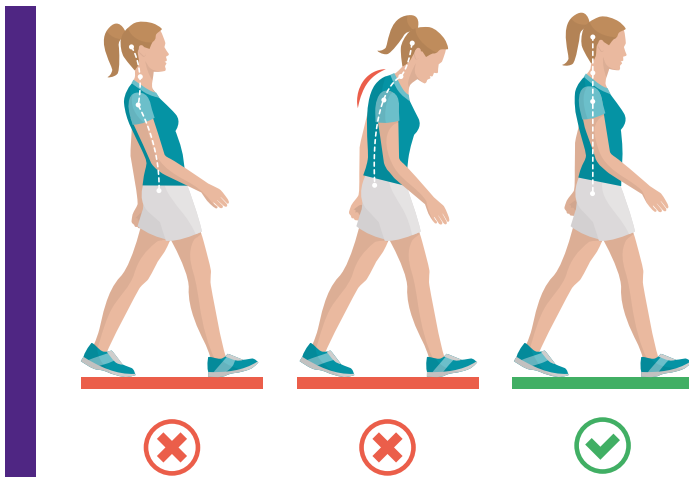
What is good posture? Think of pulling your entire body up, like you have a piece of string on the top of your head. From a side view, the invisible string would follow right behind and through your ear, behind the midline of your neck, down through your shoulder joint and hip joint, then slightly in front of the center of your knee, and down just in front of the ankle joint. The best way to tell if you are practicing good posture is to look in the mirror and do a posture check.

When sitting in front of a computer, sit with your trunk erect, no leaning back or slouching forward. Avoid crossing your knees, line your head over your shoulders, and keep your eyes level with the computer screen. This will also help you strengthen your core, which contributes even more to good posture.

Practice good posture while you are walking. You’ll breathe easier and you will find that you can walk farther and faster. Good posture when walking will also help you avoid back pain and it will make you look longer, leaner, and more fit – what a bonus!

Posture is key to good walking technique. Start by standing up straight and avoid leaning backward or forward, except when on a hill. Keep your eyes focused about 20 feet ahead of you to see your path. Your chin should be parallel to the ground. Keep your shoulders slightly back and relaxed. Tighten your core muscles to help you keep good posture. Then, tuck in your behind and rotate your hip forward slightly to keep from arching your back.

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.



## Walk Kansas Webinars

**April 17: Foot Care and Shoe Selection**

**April 24: Habit Shift to Better Health**

**Time: 12:10 p.m.**

**Link to join or scan the QR code below:**

<https://ksu.zoom.us/j/94021770836>



## Habit Shift Challenge

Work to establish a good sleep hygiene habit. Sleep hygiene is a combination of sleeping conditions and lifestyle habits that result in consistent, uninterrupted sleep. This week, focus on planning your schedule so you can start your sleep routine at the same time every evening.

## Explore Pulses

While you are probably most familiar with dry beans, lentils, dry peas, and chickpeas, hundreds of different pulses (another name for legumes) are grown around the world. Pulses can be thought of as the world's No. 1 longevity food.

Legumes are nutrition powerhouses and are unique because, nutritionally, they belong to both the protein and vegetable food groups. They have no cholesterol, are high in fiber, and are naturally low in fat. They are also good sources of folate, potassium, iron, and magnesium. Legumes are a versatile and inexpensive choice for people who must control blood sugar.

U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that people eat at least a half cup of beans every day. There are many options available, such as canned beans, and dry beans are easy to cook and can be frozen for use later.

Though dry beans don't require soaking, doing so reduces cooking time and helps dissolve gas-producing oligosaccharides. For soaking, use 10 cups of water per pound. Beans double or triple in size, so use a large pot. Bring water to a boil and simmer beans 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and let stand 1 to 4 hours. Drain, add fresh water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer gently until beans are tender but firm (45 minutes to 2 hours). Wait to add salt or acidic foods (lemon juice, vinegar, tomatoes, wine, etc.) until beans are cooked as this can toughen them. Lentils and split peas do not require soaking.

For more information on cooking with beans and recipes, go to [beaninstitute.com](http://beaninstitute.com) or [usapulses.org](http://usapulses.org).



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## Cowboy Caviar

Makes 20, 1/2 Cup Servings

### Ingredients:

- 2 15-ounce cans black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can corn (white or yellow), drained and rinsed
- 1 bell pepper (green or red), chopped
- 1 cup roma or cherry tomatoes, diced
- 1 medium jalapeno, seeded and diced
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
- Salt, to taste

### Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 4 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 4 tablespoons olive oil

### Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Prepare produce and rinse under cold running water. Dice and chop vegetables.
3. Combine all ingredients, except those designated for the dressing, in a large bowl; toss.
4. In another bowl, combine all of the dressing ingredients except for the olive oil. Whisk ingredients together. While whisking, slowly pour a thin stream of olive oil in, whisking constantly, until it has all been added.
5. Add dressing to the other ingredients. Serve immediately or refrigerate to serve later. This recipe is best if served the same day.
6. Serve with wholegrain pita crisps as an appetizer or on top of a bed of lettuce for a salad.

### Nutrition Information per 1/2 cup serving:

70 calories; 3 g total fat (0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat); 9 g carbohydrates; 4 g protein; 2 g fiber; 60 mg sodium; 3 g sugar.