

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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“Move More, Feel Better”

As the weather warms up, it's the perfect time to get moving and embrace a more active lifestyle. Regular physical activity strengthens bones and muscles, maintains or improves flexibility and range of motion, boosts cardiovascular health, helps prevent obesity, increases energy levels, enhances mental well-being, and improves overall quality of life.

To maximize the benefits of exercise, aim to incorporate a mix of aerobic exercise, strength training, stretching, and balance exercises into your routine. Aerobic activities, such as walking, jogging, dancing, or playing tennis, engage large muscle groups. These activities improve stamina while supporting heart, lung, and circulatory system health. Strength training, which can be done using free weights, resistance bands, or strength-training machines, helps maintain muscle and bone strength, boosts metabolism, and slows the progression of osteoporosis. While often overlooked, stretching is essential for maintaining flexibility and ensuring smooth movement of muscles and joints. It increases blood flow and nutrient delivery to muscles, helping to reduce soreness, tension, and pain. Balance exercises, such as front and side leg raises or toe touches, are especially important to incorporate in workouts as we age, helping to maintain stability and prevent falls.

It is recommended that adults get 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise each week. This can easily be broken down into manageable intervals, 30 minutes for 5 days a week or 50 minutes for 3 days a week. Try to focus on including strength training exercises at least 2 days per week, and remember to stretch after each workout.

If you're looking for motivation to kick-start your fitness journey, consider joining a Walk Kansas team or participating solo. This eight-week program allows you to track your exercise minutes online and convert them into miles to complete a virtual trail across Kansas. Registration opens March 4, and the program runs from March 30 to May 24. For more details or to sign up, contact the Greenwood County Extension Office or visit WalkKansas.org.

Information comes from Kansas State University Publications.