



# Celebrate *healthy living* newsletter

Week 1 | 2019

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## Move Your Way

It feels like we have had a long, cold winter in Kansas. Like me, I'm sure you are ready to welcome warmer weather and sunshine!

This past year, the revised *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* were released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Walk Kansas is based on these, and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and you will learn more about them by reading this newsletter each week. The exciting news is that we now know that regular physical activity is even more beneficial to our health than we previously thought.

Another important message conveyed through the guidelines is to *Move Your Way* — anything that gets your heart beating faster counts. You can walk, run, dance, play, garden, swim — whatever gets you moving, and it no longer needs to be 10 consecutive minutes of activity. Just as long as you are working hard enough so you can barely carry on a conversation, you can count this toward Walk Kansas minutes.

We have a variety of resources to support you in adopting more healthful lifestyle habits. Newsletters from previous years, and videos that show how to do strengthening exercises, can be found at [www.walkkansas.org](http://www.walkkansas.org). Each week, you will receive this newsletter with new information, and make sure you communicate regularly with your teammates in some way. The goal is to support and encourage each other!

You can see how your team is progressing along the challenge trail you selected by clicking “on the map” in the Walk Kansas online system. Make sure you read about the points of interest you unlock as you travel along. Walk Kansas would like to thank Marci Penner and the Kansas Sampler Foundation for partnering with us to highlight the “8 Wonders of Kansas” as well as many other “wonder” finalists. Learn more about Kansas through their books and online resources at [www.kansassampler.org](http://www.kansassampler.org).

Now, grab your walking shoes (and maybe a jacket) and hit the trail!

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## Get Ready to Walk

Getting your body ready for exercise, and cooling down afterward, are crucial to prevent injuries and improve flexibility. When pressed for time, however, many people skip this part of a walking/activity routine.

Start with 5 to 10 minutes of light activity, such as walking, that will raise your breathing and heart rate slightly and prepare your muscles, which helps avoid injury. You can include dynamic stretches during a warm up. These are slow, controlled movements such as arm circles, shoulder rolls, and knee lifts.

Just as important as the warm-up is the cool down time. For the last 5 to 10 minutes of your walk, slow your pace to allow your breathing to return to normal. This will also help reduce muscle stiffness. After the cool down is the best time to stretch your muscles because they are warmed up. Static stretching, where you hold a stretch for 15 to 30 seconds, is best. Do upper and lower body stretches and never stretch to the point of pain — just slight discomfort. Stay relaxed as you stretch and breathe in and out slowly. Don't hold your breath. Make sure you stretch both sides of your body equally and don't bounce or jerk while stretching. Stretch every day, if possible, or at least 3 times per week, and always stretch after walking or exercise.



## Let's Talk Trash

Food waste is a growing problem that affects everyone. Approximately 40 percent of food grown on farms in the U.S. will never make it to the table. While food is wasted everywhere from farm to table, in the U.S. most food waste happens later in the food supply chain, including households, restaurants, and food service. Consumers are actually the greatest offenders and waste 15 to 20 percent of their food.

Think for a few minutes about food you have wasted recently. Perhaps it was a half-eaten meal left on the plate at a restaurant, food scraps from a meal you prepared, or milk you poured down the drain because the "sell by" date had passed. On average, Americans toss and waste 23 pounds of potentially edible food per person each month. At this rate, food waste is costing the average family of four approximately \$190 per month.

During Walk Kansas this year, these articles will focus on making healthful food choices and include a delicious and nutritious recipe. In addition, you will receive tips for planning, organizing, preparing, and storing food safely to save on your food dollar. Ideas for repurposing leftover food, donating excess food, and recycling will be shared as well.

This recipe for Cowboy Caviar is a tasty way to serve vegetables, and the leftovers can be repurposed in so many ways.

Serving suggestions for Cowboy Caviar:

- As a dip with tortilla chips and pretzel crisps; serve with nachos.

- Spoon on top of grilled chicken, steak, fish, or on scrambled eggs.
- Serve this by itself as a salad or side.
- Tossed with greens in a salad or stir with cooked quinoa for a salad.
- Top a quesadilla, tostada, baked potato, or sweet potato.
- Mix in a wrap with grilled chicken; serve with fajitas and tacos.

This recipe is very adaptable. Add avocado just before serving; add or substitute celery, cooked chickpeas, black olives, crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese, any type of pepper or tomato, green onions, and zucchini.

This recipe makes quite a bit, so plan for using it beyond the day it is prepared. You can also freeze Cowboy Caviar for up to 2 months in an airtight container. To thaw, place in your refrigerator for a couple of days and stir well prior to serving or eating.



## The Magic Pill?

Physicians have said that if they could bottle the positive impact of exercise on one's health, it would be the most widely prescribed pill. While it is not as simple as taking a pill, you can gain these benefits by getting more physical activity throughout your day.

As you begin Walk Kansas, read through the program [Activity Guide](#). Here it describes the type of activity that you can report for Walk Kansas. You will also find simple pre/post flexibility tests and a walking test that you are encouraged to complete, before and after Walk Kansas. The ultimate reward for being active every day is a sense of accomplishment. Completing these simple tests before and after Walk Kansas can show you how much your physical fitness improves over 8 weeks.

Moving throughout your day is just as important as getting in those active minutes for Walk Kansas. Use every opportunity to add a few more steps as you complete tasks during the day. Stand at least once every hour and take breaks to do some stretching. Immediate benefits from activity include a more positive outlook and more energy.

## Hamstring Stretch

Tight hamstrings, the muscle group located in the back of your thigh, are a problem for many people. It is important to stretch this muscle group after walking or exercise.

**Seated hamstring stretch:** Sit near the front of a stable chair with a tall posture. Extend left leg straight forward with the heel on floor, toe pointed up. Try to touch the left toe with both hands, keeping the leg as straight as possible. Keep head above heart level while leaning forward. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Repeat with right leg. Complete twice for each leg.



**Hamstring stretch on floor or ground:** Lie on your back. Grab the upper thigh of your right leg, straighten the leg, and pull it up toward your chest, keeping the leg straight. Switch legs and repeat.

**Standing hamstring stretch:** Bend forward from the hips (not waist), keeping back and shoulders straight at all times. Use a chair for support and to help with balance, if needed. When upper body is parallel to floor, hold the position for 15 seconds. Relax and repeat a second time.

## Cowboy Caviar

Makes 14 servings

### Ingredients:

- 3 Roma tomatoes, diced or 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1/3 cup red onion, diced
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can black eyed peas, drained and rinsed
- 1 1/2 cups frozen, fresh, or canned sweet corn
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, diced small
- 1/3 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 4 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

### Directions:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.

2. Before dicing or chopping produce, gently rub tomatoes and cilantro under cold running water; scrub onion and peppers with a clean vegetable brush under running water.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lime juice, red wine vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
4. In a large bowl, combine tomatoes, onion, black beans, black eyed peas, corn, pepper, jalapeno pepper, and cilantro. Pour dressing over these ingredients and stir well.
5. Keep refrigerated. This dish can be served immediately; however, allowing flavors to blend for several hours in the refrigerator is preferred. Be sure to stir again before serving.

### Nutrition Information per serving:

- 110 calories
- 5 g fat (0 trans fat, 0.5 g saturated fat)
- 14 g carbohydrates
- 3 g protein
- 4 g fiber
- 180 mg sodium