

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Grand Challenges

K-State Research and Extension develops and delivers practical, research-based solutions to challenges faced by all Kansans, which includes the grand challenges:

- Global Food Systems
- Water
- Health
- Community Vitality
- Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

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Grand Challenge: Health

Title: Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Why is this issue important?

The 2014 State Indicator Report on Physical Activity from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states people who are physically active generally live longer and have a lower risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, and some cancers. Physical activity can also help control weight. However, only 46.8% of adults living in Kansas meet the minimum aerobic physical activity guidelines and just 16.5% also meet muscle-strengthening guidelines. In Kansas, 65% of adults are overweight or obese and 75% have high blood pressure.

How did Extension address this issue?

K-State Research and Extension family and consumer sciences professionals work to improve the health and vitality of individuals and communities. Extension professionals along with local partners offered Strong People, Physical Activity for Fun and Fitness, and Walk Kansas programs. These programs are evidence-based and reflect current physical activity and healthful eating guidelines and have improved the health and fitness of adult Kansans.

Outcomes

Older adults participating in **strength training programs** reported the following health benefits: Improved balance and flexibility; increased strength; increased bone density; improved emotional health; and increased physical activity.

Surveys from 68% of participants in the **Physical Activity for Fun and Fitness** program indicated: Increased knowledge of physical activity and strengthening guidelines; health benefits of being active; and increased motivation to be more physically active.

In 2014, **Walk Kansas** reached 16,200 participants. Evaluation surveys revealed the following outcomes as a result of this 8-week program:

85% were more physically active, and 81% met activity goals.

79% were confident they would continue this amount of activity during the next 6 months.

94% understand the need to break prolonged sitting throughout the day.

81% are more aware of healthy eating recommendations, and 84% increased fruit and vegetable consumption.

91% were confident they would continue this habit during the next 6 months.

72% of those reporting participated in a workplace team

Success Stories

- "My arms are stronger and my balance has improved."
- "My joints are less painful and I have become more active."
- "By changing my diet and increasing physical activity, I was able to lower my cholesterol level 40 points without medication. Thank you Walk Kansas."
- "I found that exercise truly fights off depression."
- "It has been great to walk during lunch hours and bond with my co-workers and it's a jump start to do more exercise at home."