

Boost Exercise with Intervals

Adding short bursts of high intensity activity to your moderate walking routine can add significant benefits to your health. Interval training improves lung, heart, and circulation health and is one of the best anti-aging activities you can do.

Exercise is like medicine for your bodies. People of all ages and fitness levels can benefit from adding intervals, and it can be better for overall health than slow sustained exercise.

There are many ways to add intervals to your routine and it doesn't require special equipment. The key is to start at a level that is right for you and build from there. If walking is the activity you prefer, alternate with short bursts of jogging or brisk walking. Start with a 30-second burst and then go back to walking again. Do this several times during your walk to start, then increase the length of the interval to about 2 minutes. If you walk on a treadmill, you can increase the grade for short amounts of time or increase your walking pace. By adding these bursts of vigorous activity, you will also burn more calories, which aids in weight loss.

While most people can include interval training safely, it isn't appropriate for everyone. If you haven't been exercising regularly or have a chronic health condition, be sure to check with your physician before adding any type of interval training.

As with any activity, you should begin with a 5-minute warm-up, such as walking at a slower pace and light stretching. Add just one or two intense activity bursts at first. Listen to cues your body gives you to avoid injuries and sore muscles. Challenge yourself more as your stamina improves, and always include cool-down time at the end of any activity.

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Sunny Delights

Citrus is available year round, although you can only enjoy some varieties right now. Navels are what we think of when we say “orange” and they have a long season, November into May. Blood oranges are crimson inside, getting their color from the same pigment in raspberries. They taste sweet and a little bit like berries. They are in season right now, along with Cara Cara, a type of navel. The Cara Cara is sweet and low in acid, and it has more complex flavor. Mandarins and Clementines are also delightful and can be used in this weeks recipe.



Be Grateful – Mini Challenge

Expressing gratitude can improve your physical and mental health. By recognizing the good things in your life, you are able to step away from problems for a moment and focus less on what you don't have. Thinking about what you do have increases your self-esteem, and brings more satisfaction and joy into your life. By feeling gratitude, your thoughts are free of emotions such as envy, frustration, resentment, and regret.

This week, write down three things you are grateful for each day. Post this list where you can see it so you are reminded of positive things in your life.

thankful

Muscle Strength Matters

Walking and other types of aerobic activity provide many health benefits, but they don't make muscles strong. Strength training does. You can feel a difference when your body is stronger. Strengthening exercises also improve your balance, coordination, and agility, allowing you to perform everyday movements much easier.

People start losing muscle around age 30, and the rate of muscle loss accelerates around age 50. Some of the muscle loss is part of the aging process, but inactivity accounts for the rest. The good news is that by doing strengthening exercises you can prevent muscle loss and can increase your strength — no matter your age!

Do muscle-strengthening activities two to three days a week, with a rest day between. Work all major muscle groups, including the legs, hips, back, stomach, chest, shoulders, and arms. Following are strengthening exercises you can do at home or in a gym:

Free weights or dumbbells. These are classic tools used to strengthen your upper body. They are inexpensive and available in many sizes. Start with 2-pound, 3-pound, or 5-pound weights and gradually work up. You can make your own free weights with milk jugs or plastic beverage bottles filled with water or sand. Weigh them on a household scale and secure the tops with duct tape. Adjust the weight as your fitness level changes.

Body weight exercises. These require little or no equipment since they use your body weight for resistance. Try push-ups, pull-ups, abdominal crunches, and leg squats.

Resistance tubing or bands. These offer weight-like resistance when you pull on them. They are inexpensive and good for building strength in arms and other muscles, and they are available in varying degrees of resistance.

If you are new to strength training, start slowly. Make sure you warm up with 5 to 10 minutes of stretching or walking, and always work both opposing muscle groups — right and left sides.

An excellent resource to learn proper and safe strength training exercises can be found on the [Walk Kansas website](#). These videos were produced with ACE Certified Personal Trainers.



Healthful Eating with the Seasons

To enjoy the full nourishment of food, make your menu a seasonal one. Changes in growing conditions during the four seasons are considered essential for balancing the earth's resources. While modern food processing and world-wide distribution of many foods make them available year round, there are still plenty of reasons to eat what is in season.

Seasonal produce equals optimum flavor and nutrients. Have you ever tasted a home-grown or freshly picked tomato? Produce that has ripened in the sun is wonderful and freshly picked produce is at optimal flavor. When fresh produce is held, it will lose flavor along with moisture. Foods that are chilled and then transported long distances lose their flavor every step of the way, and their nutrition quality declines. When you have the chance, eat fresh foods that have been harvested locally with their whole flavors intact.

Eating seasonal foods grown in your area is more environment friendly. It supports local farmers and reduces pollution from shipping and trucking. In-season foods are also less expensive.

Want to challenge your creativity and try some new foods? Eating seasonally can be fun and delicious when you create dishes based on what you can find at that time of year. Variety is also important for your bodies and you can benefit from what nature provides. Eating with the seasons connects you to the calendar and to one another. Think of simple joys that each season brings and how holiday celebrations are often focused on foods that are available that time of year — watermelon and fresh corn in summer; pumpkins and apples in fall/winter; and citrus, greens, and peas in the spring.

To learn more about eating in season, go to: www.walkkansas.org/eating/season.html

Citrus Salad

Makes 6 servings

Use any type of orange or mandarin in this beautiful salad and serve with orange poppy seed dressing on the side.

Ingredients:

4 cups romaine lettuce
1 navel orange
1 Cara Cara orange
1 blood orange
Several thin slices of red onion
¼ cup salted cashews, sliced
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley

Dressing:

1/3 cup olive oil
¼ cup freshly squeezed Cara Cara orange juice
2 tablespoons honey
1½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon finely chopped red onion
1 teaspoon poppy seeds
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Place the romaine lettuce on a large plate or small platter.
2. Cut the peeling off the citrus and slice into ¼-inch to 3/8-inch thick rounds, removing any seeds. Arrange the citrus rounds across the lettuce.
3. Add some red onion slices; sprinkle cashews and parsley on top.
4. To make the dressing: Place all ingredients except poppy seeds in a small bowl with tall sides or in a small food processor. Blend until thickened and smooth. Add poppy seeds and stir. Serve in a small bowl along with the salad. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Nutrition Information per serving: Calories 190; Fat 14g; Carbohydrates 15g; Protein 2g; Fiber 2g; Sodium 150mg

