

# *Celebrate* healthy living

2018 Week 3

## How to Walk Faster

There are several reasons why you might want to speed up your pace. By going faster and further during the same amount of time you will burn more calories and boost your heart rate to a level of moderate to vigorous intensity. This will boost your overall level of fitness and reduce your health risks. Three keys to walking faster are to practice good posture, use your arms to power forward and perfect your walking stride.

Good posture is key to walking comfortably and easily. Focus on being tall and straight, without arching your back. Keep your chin parallel to the ground and look forward about 20 feet ahead. Tighten your stomach, tuck in your behind and rotate your hip forward slightly. (Review your Walk Kansas newsletter from week 1 for more tips on good walking posture.)

You can boost your walking speed by using your arms correctly. It is best to not carry anything in your hands when walking. Bend your elbows at 90 degrees and hold elbows close to your body. Relax your hands, then close or curl them slightly. Your arms will work opposite of your legs — right arm is back when your right foot is forward, etc. Think of your arms

making a choo-choo train motion, back and forth. As your arms move forward, keep them straight rather than crossing your body. Diagonal motion is wasted energy.

To increase your pace, you will be taking more steps in a shorter amount of time rather than lengthening your stride. Land on your heels and then roll forward to push off with your toes.

During this third week of Walk Kansas, challenge yourself a bit more and gradually increase your walking pace.



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## Stretch your Hip Flexors

Hip flexors are a group of muscles that allow you to lift your knees toward your chest and to bend forward from the hips. Tight hip flexors are a common problem for people who spend a lot of time in a seated position. As a result of these muscles being tight, you could also have low back pain, hip pain, and injury.

Simple hip strengthening and stretching exercises can keep these muscles from getting tight and can reduce your risk of injury and pain.

### Hip Flexor Stretches

#### Seated Butterfly Stretch

This is a good stretch for your inner thighs, hips, and lower back. When doing this stretch, make sure you lean forward from your hips rather than rounding your lower back.

1. Sit on the floor with your back straight, soles of your feet pressed together, and your knees dropped to the sides as far as they will comfortably go.
2. Tighten your abdominal muscles. Grasp your feet and ankles and slowly lean forward, keeping your spine straight. Hold this pose for 10 to 30 seconds.

To reduce stress on your knees, move your feet away from your body. To increase the stretch, move your feet toward your body.

Here is a demonstration of the [Butterfly Stretch](https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/videos/stretching/seated-butterfly-stretch.php). (<https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/videos/stretching/seated-butterfly-stretch.php>)

#### Basic Hip Flexor Stretch

1. Start in a half-kneeling position on the floor. Put a cushion or two on the floor for your knee if you have knee stiffness. The back leg is the one you are about to stretch.
2. Hold a stick (ex. mop handle) in front of you and actively push it down into the ground. This will engage your core and help you do the stretch correctly.
3. Keep your body upright, squeeze your butt, and lean forward at the hips to feel the stretch.

Here is a demonstration of the [Hip Flexor Stretch](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf1XhGTBJx8). (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf1XhGTBJx8>)

### Hip Strengthening Exercises

#### Lunge

1. From a standing position, place hands on your hips and look straight ahead. Take a generous step forward with your right foot.
2. Bend your extended (right knee) and transfer your weight onto that leg. Continue to lower yourself slowly into the lunge. Your right knee should be directly above your right ankle and your left knee hovers just above the ground.
3. Step back into a standing position and repeat with your left leg.

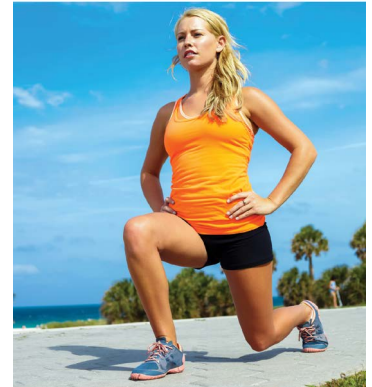
You can also do a ["walking lunge" as demonstrated here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjg4yXpXIEo&feature=youtu.be). (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjg4yXpXIEo&feature=youtu.be>)

#### Straight Leg Raise

This move will help strengthen your knees and hip flexors.

1. Lie on your back with your palms at your side, left leg extended and right leg bent.
2. Lift your straight leg up until both knees meet and hold for 2 seconds. Slowly lower your straight leg.
3. Repeat 10 to 20 times on each side.

Demonstration of the [straight leg raise](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvi8aM02_GY). ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvi8aM02\\_GY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvi8aM02_GY))



## Reframe with a Positive

Stressful situations can often be reframed in a way that presents them as opportunities rather than a threat to happiness.

To reframe a situation, examine what is stressing you. Look at things with fresh eyes. What about the situation is stressing you the most? Where do you feel a lack of control? What would you change, if you could? Brainstorm as many possibilities as you can about what you could change, without judging if you can or can't do them. You may not be able to change everything, but you may see possibilities you were not aware of.

If you are in a situation that you truly can't change, is it possible to reframe how you feel about it? Are there any benefits you can find in this crisis? Have you gained any strengths by working through this?

Look for humor. Sometimes there may be aspects of your situation that are so absurd you can't help but laugh. Finding humor can be a very positive way of dealing with stress.

## The Power of Purple

The more color you put on your plate, the better – especially when it is purple. Foods with a rich hue, such as blueberries, grapes, purple cabbage, or eggplant may help heart health, blood pressure, and obesity. Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Study (NHANES) shows that adults who eat purple and blue fruits and vegetables have reduced risk for both high blood pressure and low HDL cholesterol, which is the “good” kind. These adults were also less likely to be overweight.

So, what makes purple foods so special? The magic is found in the compounds that give purple foods their color, called anthocyanins. They are antioxidants that help protect against cell damage and help reduce inflammation. Anthocyanins are believed to also prevent some cancers and diabetes, and can improve memory.

While the benefits of purple and blue foods are widely known, they make up only 3 percent of the average American’s fruit and vegetable intake. Here are a few tips to purple-up your diet.

- Swap traditional iceberg lettuce for dark green, purple, and red leaves that boost the phytonutrients and offer more flavor and texture.
- Blueberries are rock stars among purple foods. Enjoy them fresh or frozen. Added to smoothies or oatmeal, they provide a powerful way to start your day. Enjoy them as a snack, add them to salads and baked foods, or make a berry crisp.
- Offer carrots in a variety of colors for your family to taste. Purple carrots are best served fresh or roasted as they will lose much of their gorgeous color when boiled.
- Look for purple varieties of common vegetables at the grocery store or farmers market, such as potatoes, cauliflower, and sweet potatoes. Use purple cabbage in any recipe that calls for green.
- Grow purple varieties of vegetables in your garden like onions, potatoes, peppers, and carrots.

## Berry Power Salad

*Makes 4 servings*

*To make this a light meal, top with sliced grilled chicken or salmon.*

### Ingredients:

8 ounces baby spinach

1 cup berries (The example pictured used ½ blueberries and ½ blackberries.)

1 cup sliced cucumber

3 tablespoons sliced green onions

¼ cup feta cheese

Raspberry or balsamic vinaigrette dressing

### Directions:

1. Place spinach in a large bowl; add cucumber, green onions and berries.
2. Top with feta cheese.
3. Serve vinaigrette on the side.

### Nutrition Information per serving (includes 2 tablespoons raspberry vinaigrette dressing):

90 calories

2 g fat (1g saturated fat)

15 g carbohydrates

3 g protein

3 g fiber

170 mg sodium

