

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Ste. A, Lincoln, NE 68528
402-441-7180

<http://lancaster.unl.edu>

Email: lancaster@unl.edu • Fax: 402-441-7148

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Focus on Moving More in April



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Kayla Colgrove, MS, RDN, ACSM-CPT
Extension Educator,
Lancaster Co.

April is "Move More Month," and the American Heart Association encourages all Americans to commit to being more active on a regular basis. One of the most important things you can do to improve your health is be physically active. Research shows being active can help boost your mood, improve your sleep, lower your risk of heart disease and some cancers, and help keep diabetes and high blood pressure under control. Focus on moving more in April by following these tips.

How Much Activity

In order to stay healthy, adults need a mix of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities according to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. It is recommended to aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity that gets your heart beating faster and at least 2 days a week of muscle-strengthening activity that make your muscles work harder than usual.

Chronic health conditions may affect your ability to do regular physical activity safely. Always check with your doctor before starting a physical activity routine. Older adults can follow

the guidelines for adults, but it is recommended to also add balance training and evaluate their level of effort based on their level of fitness.

Increase Activity Gradually Over Time

If you are just getting started, just remember some activity is better than none. Remember to start gradually and increase the amount and intensity of physical activity over time. Evaluate your age, level of fitness and level of experience to help reduce injury risk when increasing physical activity. The best way to get started is to focus on a light- to moderate-intensity activity, such as walking 5-15 minutes per session, 2-3 times a week. Research has shown walking to be a low risk of musculoskeletal injury and no known risk of severe cardiac events.

Enjoy the Outdoors

Now is the time to be more active by going outside and enjoying the warmer weather. Try to incorporate some of these activities:

- Walking to brisk walking
- Walking your dog
- Jogging or running
- Biking
- Golfing (without a cart)
- Playing catch
- Parking farther away from the door

If you live in Lincoln, its trail system is a great way to get

active. Learn more about the trails at <https://lincoln.ne.gov/city/parks/parksfacilities/trails>.

Think Outside the Box

Activities you have to do or don't feel like exercise still count as long as you are moving. Some examples include:

- Gardening and weeding
- Yardwork
- Mowing the lawn with a push mower
- Household chores such as vacuuming
- Home repairs
- Dancing

It is important to move more and sit less. Don't stress about having to complete 30 minutes of activity at one time. All activity adds up and even 5 minutes of physical activity has health benefits. Build your weekly activity plan using the Move Your Way Activity Planner at <https://health.gov/MoveYourWay/Activity-Planner>.

Sources:

- Move More Month. American Heart Association. www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/move-more-month
- Move Your Way. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://health.gov/moveyourway>
- Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans 2nd Edition. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition>



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Kayla Colgrove, MS, RDN, ACSM-CPT, Extension Educator, Lancaster Co.

I'm highlighting this recipe by Cami Wells, Extension Educator in Hall County, because the recipe is a simple and healthy snack for all ages. Plus, it includes three out of the five food groups: dairy, fruits and grains.

STRAWBERRY CHOCOLATE BITES

(Makes 1 serving)

- 1/4 cup diced fresh strawberries
- 2 tablespoon low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 2 squares chocolate graham crackers

1. Spread yogurt on graham crackers.
2. Top with chopped strawberries. Enjoy!

Cami's notes: Feel free to use any type of fresh or canned fruit in place of the strawberries. Greek yogurt works well because of its added thickness.



Cami Wells, Nebraska Extension in Hall County

Nutrition information per serving: 99 calories, 2g fat, 18g carbohydrate, 1g fiber and 92mg sodium.