



WALK ACROSS TEXAS PARKER COUNTY 2023 – WEEK 3

We have completed two weeks and almost 3. You are all continuing to do well. I am really impressed with the miles walked already.

This weeks newsletter focuses on stress. Walking and running are great ways to help deal with stress.

Our gift card winner this week is: Jayce James! We know where you are so it's on the way to you!

Below are the miles for teams this week.

Team	Current Mileage
AC/DC Chicks	814.60
Kicking Asphalt	566.17
Motley Crew	441.84
Joyful Walkers	401.40
Weatherford Health Care	376.68
Couts UMC 60+ Team 2	361.47
Couts UMC 60+	304.01
PCDA	231.50
Wake Up and Walk	189.92
Wired for Wellness	80.23



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The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Dealing with Stress

April is Stress Awareness month. This is observed to promote the importance of coping positively with and reducing stress. An accumulation of stress over years can lead to chronic stress and this affects our bodies negatively.

When we are stressed, our body naturally releases hormones that signal our heart rate and breathing to increase. Though, over time, chronic stress continually releases hormones that prevent our bodies from returning to a normal heart rate and normal breathing. An increase in heart rate can lead to an increase in blood pressure and blood sugar in our bodies as the liver releases more sugar, increasing the risk of Type 2 diabetes. Stress also causes our blood vessels to constrict, which increases blood pressure.

Something that can reduce stress can be found all around us in nature. Spending time in green spaces, like parks, gardens, woodlands, and forests or blue spaces, like rivers, lakes, wetlands, and beaches can have a great impact on our physical and mental wellbeing. The benefits of nature do not only include the outdoors. When we don't have access to beautiful outdoor surroundings, nature videos or sounds that depict plant and animal wildlife have been shown to reduce stress. Of course, doing activities outdoors has the most impact. According to the American Psychological Association, "people who spent at least two recreational hours in nature during the previous week, reported significantly greater health and well-being."

Stress can appear in our bodies in a variety of ways, like feelings of worry or frustration, changes in energy or appetite, trouble concentrating or sleeping, headaches, neck and back pain, or stomach problems. When we feel the effects of stress on our bodies, Extension Program Specialist for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Julie Tijerina recommends we enjoy some time in nature. Tijerina states that "spending as little as 10 minutes outdoors can have a tremendous benefit on our health by reducing blood pressure, decreasing blood sugar levels, lowering stress, and achieving an overall positive mood."

The following to help cope with the effects of stress:

Gardening: Spending at least 20 minutes in the garden has been shown to improve wellbeing by increasing our physical activity, reducing stress, and lowering blood pressure.

Connecting: Nature offers many opportunities for connection to the surrounding environment through our senses. Simple practices such as listening to birds singing, smelling flowers, touching the soil with your hands and feet, feeling the warmth of the sun, or gazing at the stars can help bring a feeling of peace and calmness.

Being Outdoors: Observing natural elements for 10-30 minutes, without distractions, can help decrease heart rate, cortisol levels (which increase sugar levels in our body), blood pressure, and can promote an overall feeling of being calm, refreshed, and restored.

Green Exercise: Walking or exercising outdoors for 10 – 30 minutes helps reduce stress, heart rate, cortisol levels, and blood pressure.

Walk Across Texas give us all away to reduce stress. And it is a great way to get outdoors.



POSITIVE COPING SKILLS FOR STRESS AND ANXIETY

1. Write your thoughts/feelings in a **journal** 
2. **Play an instrument** 
3. **Listen to music**- lay back or sit down and focus on the music
4. **Write a story** 
5. **Write a letter** to the person you are stressing over (you don't have to actually send it) 
6. Eat a **healthy and nutritious** meal or snack 
7. Go for a **walk** 
8. Go to the **gym** 
9. Exercise at home 
10. Do **yoga** 
11. **Meditate** 
12. Take some **deep breaths**
13. **Stretch** 
14. Watch a **feel-good movie** or TV show
15. **Read** 
16. Take a **social media detox**
17. **Paint/draw/color** 
18. **Crochet/knit/sew** 
19. **De-clutter** or clean your living space 
20. Go for a **bike ride** 
21. Go to the **park**
22. Have a **picnic** 
23. Listen to a **podcast** 
24. Spend time **playing with a pet** 
25. Spend time with **family** 
26. Spend time with a **friend/significant other**
27. **Vent** to a close friend or family member 
28. Schedule an appointment for **therapy**
29. **Practice mindfulness**- being fully aware in the present moment
30. **Slow down**- approach the tasks you normally have to do with a calm and slow attitude 
31. Go for a **relaxing drive**
32. **Sit outside** and take in the sunlight 
33. Do your **nails/hair/makeup** 
34. Take a **day for self-care**
35. Do anything **creative** 
36. **Take photos** and/or edit them 
37. Shoot and edit a **video**
38. **Make a vision board** of things you love 
39. Put your to-do list on **pause**
40. Take a **mental health day** off from work
41. **Reorganize** your belongings 
42. **Redecorate/rearrange** your room
43. Do a **face mask** 
44. Take a **relaxing bath**
45. Write down the things that are stressing you out that you have no control over and rip them up and throw them in the garbage- **practice letting go** 
46. Create a list of **positive affirmations** for yourself
47. **Garden**- tend to your plants inside and/or outside
48. **Practice gratitude**- make a list of the things you are grateful for
49. **Practice compassion**- be kind to yourself when you are struggling, notice and change critical or judgmental thoughts
50. **Practice acceptance**- accept the emotions you are experiencing not as good or bad, but just as part of your experience- they will eventually pass