



WEEK 2

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

# WALK ACROSS TEXAS

Parker County 2024 Spring Challenge

## Walking Can Help Relieve Stress

Wildfires, higher groceries, bird flu, income-taxes and even the solar eclipse. All of these and more can increase our stress. Walking might be just what the doctor ordered to relieve the stress associated with flooding. Getting moderate exercise such as walking can enhance our mood while it strengthens our hearts and reduces our risk for diabetes, cancer, and numerous other health issues.

Research has shown that walking promotes the release of brain chemicals called endorphins that stimulate relaxation and improve our mood. Walking does not have to be done at a fast pace to have stress-relieving benefits. Even a stroll at a comfortable pace promotes relaxation, studies indicate.

Meditating while walking had the greatest impact on mood enhancement, according to a 16-week study with 135 volunteers divided into five groups. The different groups walked quickly or slowly. Some groups meditated while they walked, and some groups did not meditate.

As their meditation, the walkers simply counted “one, two, one, two” as they walked. The meditation was designed to have them focus on their steps instead of thinking about other concerns. Regardless of the speed of their walking, the meditating groups experienced the greatest impact on stress reduction and mood enhancement.

Fitness experts recommend that we get 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Even 10- or 15-minute increments of physical activity can have health benefits. Walking for fitness or stress relief can be done almost anywhere: in a shopping mall, on a treadmill in front of your TV, or outdoors.

Ongoing stress puts us at greater risk for developing physical issues, including heart disease and cancer, and may increase or decrease our appetite. Along with getting regular physical activity, staying well-nourished is important for preventing the effects that stress might exert on the body.

“Be sure to eat a healthful diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables,” Garden-Robinson says. “The latest recommendations say that half our plate should be fruits and vegetables, and the rest of our plate should include lean protein and grain-based foods, especially whole grains, with a cup of dairy on the side.”

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

Try these tips adapted from the Weight Information Network, an information service of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. If you are new to walking, be sure to check with your health-care provider prior to beginning an exercise program.

- Choose a safe place to walk. Find a partner to encourage and support each other.
- Wear shoes with proper arch support, a firm heel, and thick, flexible soles. When you buy shoes, be sure to walk around the store before you take them home. Try to buy your shoes late in the day when your feet are at their largest.
- Wear clothes that keep you dry and comfortable.
- Divide your walk into three parts. First, warm up slowly and then increase your speed to a brisk walk. Walk fast enough to elevate your heart rate while still being able to speak comfortably, concentrate and breathe without effort. Finally, cool down after your walk.
- Break up your walk into multiple sessions throughout the day if you have a busy schedule. Be sure each session is at least 10 minutes long.
- Vary your routine. Try walks in different places to see different scenery.
- Set goals and reward yourself for your progress. Instead of splurging on a calorie-dense treat, see a movie, read a magazine, or take time to do something else you enjoy.
- Keep track of your progress with a walking journal, log, or calendar. Record the date, time, and distance.

## Lake Mineral Wells State Park & Trails

Lake Mineral Wells State Park sits in the heart of cattle country, near what is returning to be a popular health resort. There are many trails to explore. From east to challenge, from lakeside views to scenic Cross Timber trails. Or how about setting out on the 20-mile Trailway, with its flat grades and gentle curves.

There are a lot of wonderful things to do at the park including boating, fishing, rock climbing and more.

Make plans to visit Lake Mineral Wells State Park for one of your walks. The park is located off of US Highway 180 on P71.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF WALKING FOR EXERCISE?

### PHYSICAL BENEFITS

- Builds fitness, strengthens muscles and bones
- Enhances cardiovascular health and boosts energy
- Reduces risks of heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers
- Manages chronic conditions and aids in weight loss
- Improves sleep quality



### MENTAL BENEFITS

- Sparks creativity, elevates mood, and relieves stress
- Enhances cognitive function, memory, and brain health
- Immediate relief from anxiety and depression with short walks
- Quick stress reduction: 10 minutes of walking can be as effective as a 45-minute workout



### GET MOVING TODAY!

Programs like Walk Across Texas, Walk Through Texas History, and the 10&10,000 Change Challenge can kick start your walking routine.

Start walking now to enjoy both physical and mental health benefits!



### LEARN MORE



<https://howdyhealth.tamu.edu/benefits-of-walking-inspiration-to-move-more/>

Team Name	Current Miles
Shake N Bake	890.51
Walking Dead	803.08
Kicking Asphalt	696.4
HotMessExpress	423.41
Saucer Sippinâ€™™ Sisters	395.61
Joyful Walkers	357.17
404 Name Not Found	345.76
Strolling Sisters	226
Florida Sunshine	57.88
Couts 60+ 2	25
<b>Total Miles</b>	<b>4220.82</b>

**We have a gift card winner:  
Jenny Gentry!**

**We know where you are so it is on the way to you.**



## Lemon Garlic Roasted Shrimp

1 lb. Shrimp, large, peeled, and deveined or your favorite fish cut into 4 fillets.

1 tbsp. Olive Oil

1 Lemon zested and juiced.

2 Garlic cloves, minced.

½ tsp red pepper flakes (optional)

¼ tsp salt

Black pepper to taste

1. Gather all necessary equipment and ingredients. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Combine the peeled and deveined shrimp with the olive oil, lemon zest and juice, garlic, salt, and pepper. Allow to marinate for about 15 minutes.
3. Once marinated, transfer the shrimp to a sheet pan and roast in the preheated oven until pink, opaque, and cooked through, about 8-10 minutes. (If using fish, cook until it is opaque and flakes easily with a fork, time will depend on thickness of your fillets)
4. Remove from the oven and serve in 4 oz. portions over the Sor any pasta dish, salad, or cooked vegetables and rice!

Calories: 130; Fat: 4 g.; Carbohydrate: 1 g; Protein 23 g.

Source: The Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine, Tulane University