



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/walk-kansas-healthy-habits>

Released: March 25, 2024

Simple shifts can help positive habits stick, says K-State specialist

Jackson boosts webinars to be offered during 2024 Walk Kansas program

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Sometimes, developing positive lifestyle habits takes just a little nudge. Take, for instance, a daily walk.

Sharolyn Jackson explains it like this: “Perhaps a barrier to getting a couple of short walks in during your work days is that the shoes you wear for work are not comfortable for walking. So, keep a pair of walking shoes in your office or workplace.”

Jackson, a K-State Research and Extension family and consumer sciences specialist in northeast Kansas, is the state leader of the popular Walk Kansas program that routinely draws more than 4,000 participants in the state and across the country.

[Signup is currently underway online for Walk Kansas](#), which encourages participants to form teams of six that collectively and virtually walk across the state of Kansas – or approximately 423 miles – in eight weeks.

Walk Kansas is also open to those who want to take on the eight-week challenge by themselves.

Jackson said this year’s program includes many features familiar to past participants, including a weekly activity log, fun facts about sites throughout the state, and a weekly newsletter.

But she’s also excited about three webinars that will help spur participants’ motivation, including:

- The science of happiness and how physical activity plays a role.
- Self care of feet and choosing the best shoe for activity.
- Shifting habits and making tiny habits count.

“Many of the positive habits that we can shift don’t require a lot of effort or willpower,” Jackson said. “These are things we can weave into our day and link to things we already do.”

Jackson said there is “a real science” behind shifting habits.

“Let’s say there’s a habit that you want to change,” she said. “You can break that down into your habit loop and the micro-steps to determine the cue that’s nudging you to make a particular behavior (that you want to change).”

Jackson said environment, resources or support systems can often be shifted to help encourage a healthier habit.

“If we can become accustomed to knowing what is going to help nudge us a little bit further toward the positive habit, then that’s what we’re looking for, because habits are derived from implicit memory, or things we do unconsciously, like tying your shoes or riding a bike.”

“When you get to a point that it becomes that type of habit, you just do it as part of your day, and even a one degree change in your habits can have a profound change in your life.”

More information about this year’s featured webinars, registration and other features of Walk Kansas is also available at [local extension offices in Kansas](#).

Jackson recently spoke at length about the upcoming webinars on the weekly radio program, [Sound Living, which is available online](#).

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

Walk Kansas (information and registration), <https://www.walkkansas.org>

K-State Research and Extension statewide offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations>

Sound Living (K-State Research and Extension podcast), <https://soundlivingksu.libsyn.com>

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Source

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