

K-State Movement Challenge Newsletter

Week 1: Getting Started is the First Step

Welcome to the K-State Movement Challenge for the Fall semester of 2016. You are well on your way to a healthier, more active you. You probably encounter messages encouraging you to be more active all the time. There are many great benefits of being physically active, but there are many barriers that make it difficult to fit physical activity into our lives as well. We hope this newsletter will provide some useful information as you get started.

Get Moving – For Your Health and Well-being

The benefits to leading a physically active lifestyle are numerous and you've likely heard many of them. Physical activity is key to the prevention of chronic disease and excessive weight gain. It can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, and even some forms of cancer. Beyond the physiological benefits, physical activity promotes psychological health as well. People who are physically active are less likely to experience episodes of depression and experience less severe symptoms of anxiety than those who are physically inactive.

These long-term benefits are great, but they may be too far off to motivate you to be active TODAY. Fortunately, there are also short-term benefits of physical activity that will have an immediate positive impact on your daily quality of life. These include:

- Stress relief
- Increased energy
- Time to clear your head

If you view physical activity as a means of enhancing your daily well-being, it becomes something you **want to do** instead of something you feel like you have to do.

Overcoming Barriers – Go for the Goal!

Many of us are bombarded by tasks at work and at home. We're constantly checking and sending emails, answering phone calls, preparing for meetings, cooking for our families, helping our kids with homework... The list goes on. It's understandable that we feel our time is limited. Other barriers include: lack of resources, lack of social support, and lack of motivation. These are significant barriers to leading a physically active lifestyle, especially for those of us who haven't been very active before we decided to participate in this Movement Challenge. What can we do to overcome these barriers?

A simple method to overcome barriers is to set a goal and track the progress you've made to reach it. You don't need to make elaborate goals. In fact, setting small, achievable goals will lead to big success over time. If you're just starting on the path to becoming more physically active, don't expect to run a 5k on day one. Instead, set a goal you can achieve at your current level of activity. You can use your smart phone or an activity tracking device to keep count of the steps you take throughout the day. If you usually get about 5000 steps each day, make a goal to increase it to 6,000 or 7,000. You'll be surprised how many more steps you take if you track your steps with a great goal in mind!

As you encounter barriers, identify strategies to overcome them. For example, if it's difficult to set aside a big chunk of time to be active, plan to take several 10-minute walks throughout the day. Use the **Planning Worksheet** resource on the HCS website to set your goals and make plans to achieve them.

Write About It!

Many activity tracking devices such as a Fitbit, some pedometers, as well as smartphone apps come with a program that will help you easily track your activity throughout the day. In addition to using these devices, a journal is a great place to track your thoughts and feelings about your physical activity. There will be some changes associated with becoming more physically active, especially if you're starting from square one. These may include pain, additional fatigue, muscle soreness, or scheduling conflicts.

Complete the **Activity Journal** during the first week you participate in the Challenge. Use it to jot down some notes about how you feel before and after you engage in an activity. You might notice that, on some days, you feel tired before you go for a walk over lunch and more energized after. You may feel stiff or mentally drained before a yoga class and totally alert after. On other days, you may not feel like being very active at all.

That's okay! Write it down and track if and how you overcame barriers. This will give you a running log of your progress. Read through past entries from time to time and see how your thinking has changed and how your activity levels have increased. If you're comfortable doing so, share your entries with your teammates. You may find that your struggles and achievements are similar to those around you. Have a discussion about any changes you may be noticing. Do you feel better about yourself? More energized and focused at work? Better able to concentrate during long meetings? Keeping a journal will provide a gentle reminder that a healthier, active life is just around the corner!