

A person is running on a paved path in a park. The person is wearing dark blue leggings, a blue and purple patterned shirt, and light blue sneakers with white soles. The background shows lush green trees and a bright, sunny atmosphere. In the distance, other people can be seen walking on the path.

Thrive

MARCH TO INDEPENDENCE

JULY TOOLKIT

This month, Thrive is initiating a coup d'état against the tyranny of cardiovascular disease! The Fourth of July is Independence Day for the United States. Many of our ancestors marched in the streets to fight for our independence from the British, which has inspired us to promote more movement in our day-to-day lives through the “March to Independence” toolkit.

In this toolkit, we discuss the heart of cardio, steps people can take to move more, ways to monitor steps during activities, and local hiking trails and local events that can promote movement. Together, we can liberate ourselves from the world's leading cause of early death!

HEART OF CARDIO

Cardio training offers a wide range of benefits for both physical and mental health. It strengthens the heart and lungs, improving cardiovascular endurance and oxygen delivery throughout the body. Regular cardio exercise helps regulate blood pressure, lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. It also supports weight management by burning calories and boosting metabolism.

Beyond its physical health benefits, cardio also enhances mood by releasing endorphins, reducing stress and improving sleep quality. Cardio increases stamina as well, allowing you to perform daily activities with greater ease. It also promotes brain function by improving circulation and cognitive performance.

Beyond its general advantages, cardio training benefits both women and men in unique ways.

For women: Regular cardio can help regulate hormones, especially during pregnancy or menopause, in turn improving mood and energy levels. It also supports bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis, which is more common in women than it is in men. Cardio also aids in circulation and lymphatic health, decreasing bloating and promoting better recovery from exercise.

For men: Cardio plays a key role in testosterone regulation, as it helps maintain energy levels and metabolic function as men age. It supports vascular health by improving circulation and reducing the risk of high blood pressure. Cardio can also enhance athletic endurance, making strength training or high-intensity workouts more effective.

Across all ages and genders, cardio strengthens the immune system, improves lung capacity, boosts cognitive function and contributes to better sleep quality.

Getting around 10,000 steps a day is widely recommended because it promotes overall physical health, cardiovascular fitness and mental well-being.

Even if you can't reach 10,000 steps every day, any increase in movement brings benefits.

Whether it's running, swimming, cycling, brisk walking or even dancing, consistent cardio training leads to long-term health benefits, improved overall well-being and a stronger, healthier body over time.





OKLAHOMA EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

THRIVE'S STATE EMPLOYEE WALKING CLUB

We'd love to help you reach your cardio goals! [Join Thrive's walking club](#) and give purpose to your health journey.

For those who want to join a group walk, even beginners, this program includes different challenges throughout the year and meetups at different locations. We have identified many walking locations across the state, and we will continue to add more as we find them. Everyone who signs up will be sent information and resources to help you get started.

JOIN THE CLUB

STEPS TO MOVE MORE

Increasing daily movement is easier than you might think – it just takes a little creativity and consistency. Here are some simple but effective strategies to help you stay active throughout the day:

Make small changes to your routine:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park farther away to get extra steps in.
- Walk while talking – pace around during your phone calls instead of sitting.
- Set movement reminders every hour to stand, stretch or do light exercises.

Incorporate walking throughout the day:

- Start a regular morning or evening walk to build consistency.
- Turn errands into walking opportunities – take a lap around the store before shopping, or walk to the store if you can!
- Opt for walking meetings instead of sitting in a conference room.
- Use a standing desk and shift positions regularly.

Engage in active hobbies:

- Try recreational activities like dancing, swimming or hiking.
- Join a local sports league for sports like basketball, soccer or tennis.
- Do household chores like vacuuming or gardening – they count as movement!

Use technology to your advantage:

- Track your steps using a pedometer or smartwatch.
- Use fitness apps that feature daily movement challenges.
- Join virtual workouts or implement quick exercise routines to stay consistent.

Sneak in short workouts:

- Stretch or do bodyweight exercises such as push-ups or squats during breaks.
- Try mini workouts (with intervals of five to 10 minutes) throughout the day.
- Do calf raises or leg exercises while brushing your teeth or cooking.

**Small adjustments
add up, and this
type of movement
will eventually
become second
nature.**

STEP EQUIVALENTS FOR VARIOUS EXERCISES



For people who prefer other forms of exercise than walking, it can be useful to have a rough idea of how other cardio activities compare to walking. You can estimate step equivalents for different activities based on intensity and duration. Here's a general guide:

ACTIVITY	APPROX. STEPS PER MINUTE
Rowing machine (moderate pace)	111
Bicycling (10 mph pace)	133
Rollerblading	156
Hiking (general terrain)	172
Tennis (singles)	178
Rowing machine (vigorous pace)	189
Skiing (cross-country)	200
Swimming laps (moderate pace)	212
Martial arts	222
Running (10-minute mile pace)	222
Spinning class	240
Jumping rope (moderate-fast pace)	244
Rock climbing	244
Elliptical machine	249

To convert an activity into steps, multiply the minutes spent doing that activity by the step equivalent per minute. For example, 30 minutes of cycling at 10 mph (equivalent to 133 steps per minute) would be 3,990 steps, since 30 times 133 equals 3,990.

WALKING THE WELLNESS PATH



Oklahoma is home to some of the best parks and nature trails. Get more social and invite friends to join you, or find your zen by taking a meditative stroll by yourself. The trails below are accompanied by estimates of the time it takes to complete them while walking, but you're not limited to just walking. Find what you enjoy and embrace the outdoors!

EASY

Tree Trail – Beavers Bend State Park	28 min
North Cedar Creek Waterfall Trail – Ouachita National Forest	16 min
Martin Nature Trail – Martin Park Nature Center	31 min

MODERATE

Friends Trail Loop – Beavers Bend State Park	44 min
Turkey Mountain via Yellow Loop – Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness	1 hr, 26 min
Elk Mountain Trail – Charon's Garden Wilderness	1 hr, 3 min

HARD

Skyline Trail – Beavers Bend State Park	4 hr, 13 min
Charon's Garden Trail – Charon's Garden Wilderness	2 hr, 28 min
Keystone Ancient Forest Falls Trail – Keystone Ancient Forest	2 hr, 22 min

[VIEW A FULL LIST](#)

HIIT UP LOCAL EVENTS



Nature not your thing? Whether you're into high-intensity interval training (HIIT) or something else, there are opportunities to get more steps in by supporting local events all over Oklahoma. Below, we've highlighted farmers markets, flea markets, art walks and many more events that you can check out over the next several weeks.

ACTIVITY	DATE(S)
<u>2025 Oklahoma Festival Guide</u>	July 4
<u>Woodyfest in Okemah: Celebrating the life & legacy of Woody Guthrie</u>	July 9-12
<u>Affair of the Heart shopping event in Tulsa</u>	July 11-13
<u>2nd Friday Norman Art Walk</u>	July 11 Aug. 8
<u>ONIE Project – Let's Get Moving Lawton 2K</u>	July 12
<u>OKC Flea Market</u>	July 12-13 Aug. 9-10
<u>Smacker Farmers Market in Poteau</u>	July 12 July 26 Aug. 9
<u>Lawton Farmers Market Annual Tomato Festival</u>	July 13
<u>First Friday Art Crawl in Tulsa</u>	Aug. 1
<u>2 Hip Chicks Roadshow in Claremore</u>	Aug. 2