



## Spring into Action with Walking

With the weather getting warmer and the sun shining for longer, the spring season is a great time to get outside and get moving. Physical activity doesn't have to be strenuous. A simple walk can be just as beneficial!

A daily brisk walk can help you:

- Improve cardiovascular fitness
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Increase energy levels
- Improve your mood, cognition, memory, and sleep
- Strengthen your immune system
- Reduce stress
- And the list goes on!

Here are tips to set you up for success with your next walk:

1. Start with a simple goal of a 5–10-minute walk and increase timeframe as walking becomes a habit. Work your way up to aim for at least 30 minutes a day.
2. Make walking enjoyable by listening to music, walking with a friend, or wearing a comfortable outfit
3. Don't give up if you miss any walking days. Take each day in stride and remind yourself how great it feels to walk.
4. Make sure to warm up and cool down your body with a few minutes of stretches or a slower walking pace
5. Vary your route by choosing different neighborhoods, parks, walking trails, or even the mall!

With no special equipment or gym membership needed, you can take the steps to reach better physical and mental health!

### Food Safety Tips

Follow safe grilling tips to ensure safe eating at picnics and cookouts! Marinate safely in the fridge, cook food thoroughly by using a food thermometer, and keep "ready" food hot. Grilled food can be kept hot by moving it to the side of the grill rack, away from the coals. This keeps it hot but prevents overcooking. Hot foods should be kept at or above 140 degrees F.



If you need help with food, apply online for WIC today!

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program provides monthly food benefits to pregnant women, postpartum women, and children under the age of 5 years. Apply online or contact your local WIC office for more information.

TO APPLY ONLINE VISIT:  
[mass.gov/forms/apply-for-wic-online](https://mass.gov/forms/apply-for-wic-online)



## Apricot Bars

### Ingredients

- Cooking Spray
- 1 cup oats, quick cooking
- 1 cup flour
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 5 tablespoons apple juice, divided
- 1/2 cup apricot jam
- 1 cup apricots, dried, diced

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Spray 9 X 9-inch baking pan with cooking spray.
3. In large bowl, mix together oats, flour, sugar, cinnamon, salt and baking soda until combined.
4. In a small bowl, whisk oil and 3 tablespoons juice together. Pour over oat mixture and mix well.
5. Set aside 1/2 cup of oat mixture for the topping. Press remaining mixture evenly into prepared pan.
6. In small bowl, blend jam with remaining 2 tablespoons apple juice. Stir in dried apricots. Spread evenly over crust.
7. Sprinkle reserved oat mixture over apricots and lightly pressing down with fingers.
8. Bake 35 minutes or until golden. Cool in pan on wire rack before cutting into bars.

Makes 16 servings (1 bar each)

### Nutrition Facts

Apricot Bars

Amount Per Serving

Calories 133

Calories from Fat 45

	% Daily Value*
<b>Total Fat</b> 5g	8%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1g	
Monounsaturated Fat 3g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 59mg	2%
<b>Potassium</b> 71mg	2%
<b>Total Carbohydrates</b> 21g	7%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 9g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	4%
<b>Vitamin A</b>	4%
<b>Vitamin C</b>	6%
<b>Vitamin D</b>	0%
<b>Calcium</b>	1%
<b>Iron</b>	4%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet.

### LOOKING FOR RECIPE INSPIRATION?

Check out Click 'N Cook®, our online recipe database at [clickncook.org](http://clickncook.org)



## What can you do with: Walnuts



**Choosing:** For whole nuts, avoid any where the shell shows signs of mold. For shelled nuts, avoid nutmeats that are discolored.

**Storing:** Whole nuts can be stored at room temperature for several weeks. Shelled nuts must be refrigerated immediately or can be frozen in a tightly sealed bag. Frozen walnuts can last up to a year.

**Cooking:** Walnuts can be eaten as is but roasting them in an oven or pan can enhance the flavor. Add walnuts to a variety of recipes like salads, oats, or baked goods like banana bread.

**Nutrition:** One ounce of walnuts, or one handful, provides an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids – more than any other tree nut! These fatty acids are beneficial for heart health.

**A CLICK N' COOK RECIPE**  
MORE AT: [CLICKNCOOK.ORG](http://CLICKNCOOK.ORG)

### Vegan Lentil Walnut Loaf



#### Ingredients

- 1 cup lentils dried
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts or chopped pecans (optional)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion yellow or white, diced
- 1 stalk celery diced
- 1 large carrot shredded
- 2 teaspoons garlic minced (or 1 large clove)
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 4 tablespoons ketchup

#### Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.
2. Simmer the lentils in broth for about 25 minutes or until the lentils are tender and have absorbed all the broth.
3. Place walnuts (if using) on a cookie sheet and toast for six to seven minutes. Set aside and allow to cool.
4. In a pan, heat olive oil over medium high heat. Saute the onion and celery for about six minutes, or until tender, not caramelized (no brown bits). Add the garlic and carrot and cook for about another four minutes.
5. Add the oregano, salt and pepper and then take the mixture off the stove and transfer to a large bowl. Add walnuts.
6. Add the breadcrumbs and cooked lentils and stir gently to combine.
7. Press mixture into a greased loaf pan and spread ketchup on top.
8. Bake for 40 minutes, cool for 5 minutes, slice and serve.





## Prep Your Fresh Produce

Prepping your fresh fruits and vegetables will reduce food waste and increase the chance that they will be added to meals or eaten as a snack, especially when short on time. Here are some considerations when prepping produce:

**Consider proper storage.** A lot of produce keeps well in the fridge and stays fresher for longer when stored in a sealed bag. Certain produce like potatoes, onions, garlic, and bananas are best left at room temperature.

**Clean before storing.** Washing before storing is one less step to do later. Gently rub the produce item while holding under clean, cool water. Dry it off with a clean cloth or paper towel to reduce bacteria present.

**Peel, chop, and store.** After cleaning, peel and chop any fruits or vegetables that you know you will eat or use in a recipe throughout the week, like chopped peppers, onions, or strawberries.

**Not going to use it within a week? Freeze It.** You can freeze your produce for up to a year. This way you don't have to worry about it going bad too quickly. Make sure to check your freezer stock before buying more produce!

The more you prep your produce, the easier and faster it gets over time and most importantly, the more fruits and vegetables you will eat!



**April 2023**

**National Grilled Cheese Month**

**National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day**

April 2

**National Empanada Day**

April 8

**National Animal Crackers Day**

April 18

**National Cherry Cheesecake Day**

April 23

**National Oatmeal Cookie Day**

April 30