

# The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Intermediate

Welcome  
to the Clover Cat  
Way to Wellness  
Intermediate Level.



Welcome to the Clover Cat Way to Wellness! Have you heard of wellness? Wellness can help you to have balance, health, and happiness in your life.

## What Does Wellness Mean to You?

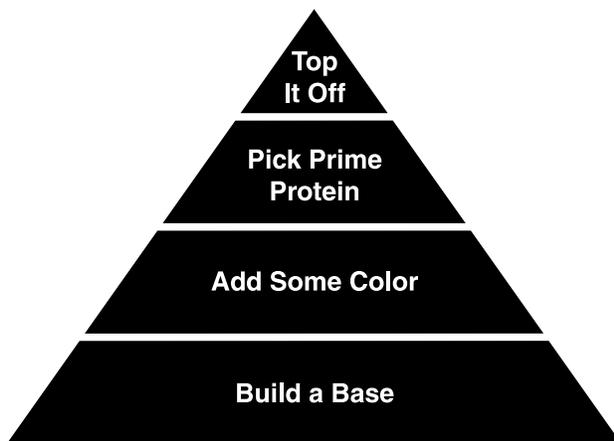
- Freedom from disease.
- Feeling good.
- Improving health.
- Keeping in shape.
- Being stress free.
- Being your best.

The Clover Cat Way to Wellness is a personal approach to better health for Kentuckians. It is designed to help you find better ways to take care of yourself and your community. The program will show you how to take steps to improve your diet, your activity level, and your well-being. The Clover Cat Way to Wellness includes three main areas called CATSkills. CATSkills are the latest skills to get healthy.

## The CATSkills are:

- Choose foods for a healthy diet.
- Activate your life.
- Take time to be well.

So, how can you find the way to wellness? This program will help you learn about CATSkills and how you can take steps to improve your health.



**Clover Cat Way to Wellness:  
Choose Foods for  
a Healthy Diet**

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Did you know that a healthy diet is a key way to achieve good health and to protect yourself from future diseases, such as cancer and heart disease? Eating a healthy diet can seem complicated but not when you use Pyramid Power! Pyramid Power means using the Food Guide Pyramid to guide your daily food choices.

The Food Guide Pyramid is a resource of what we need to eat each day based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) dietary guidelines. Pyramid Power gives an outline of the number of servings you need to eat each day from a variety of food sources to maintain a healthy weight and receive the proper amount of nutrients. Not every food or every food group contains all the essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals. By choosing foods from each group, you can add variety and new tastes to your diet while staying fit and healthy. The Food Guide Pyramid consists of six food groups, but we will reduce that number to four to simplify your busy life!

## **Build a Base**

Foods from the base of the pyramid should make up most of your daily diet. Base foods are high in complex carbohydrates, which provide lots of energy for your body to function properly. Do you enjoy cereal or waffles for breakfast? How about toast? A sandwich made with whole-grain bread for lunch is a nice option. Pizza, burritos, rice, and pasta provide healthy base carbohydrates. Shoot for six to 11 servings each day. Chances are, these are some of your favorite foods.

***What Is a  
"Build a Base" Serving?***

- One slice of bread or half a hamburger bun. (A sandwich counts as two servings.)
- 1/2 cup of cooked pasta or rice.
- 3/4 cup of breakfast cereal.
- 4 crackers.
- 1 4-inch pancake.
- 1 6-inch tortilla.
- Half a bagel or English muffin.



## Add Some Color

Adding color to your diet means eating plenty of fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals, and they taste great.

Five-a-Day should be your motto for fruits and veggies. Consuming five servings each day will provide your body with a wealth of nutrients and provide protection against many diseases, including some types of cancer. Try to consume a few different colors each day to equal five servings. Eat a red tomato, a green salad, an orange carrot, and a yellow banana, and drink a glass of orange juice. That's Five-a-Day the colorful way! Eat a rainbow of healthy foods for a colorful diet. Who wants a dull, boring meal when adding color is so healthy and easy?

## Pick Prime Protein

Picking prime protein means looking for low-fat choices of meat and meat substitutes or milk and dairy products. Protein helps build muscle and provides your body with the materials required for proper growth.

Turkey breast, lean beef, and lean pork are healthy meat sources of protein. Healthy meat substitutes include peanut butter, beans and legumes, and soy foods. Low-fat or skim milk and low-fat cheeses are excellent dairy sources of prime protein. Aim for two to four servings of dairy each day and two servings of meat or meat substitutes to make sure you are getting enough protein. Dairy products are also a great source of calcium and vitamin D, both important for strong bones and teeth.

### What Is an

#### **“Add Some Color” Serving?**

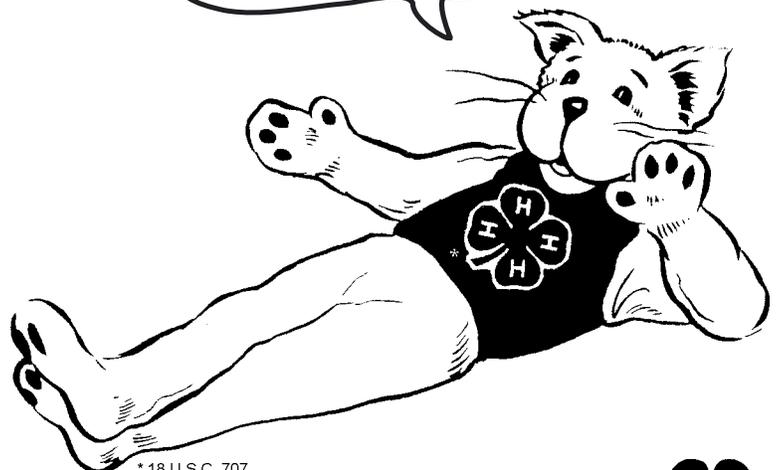
- Half a banana or grapefruit.
- A medium apple, orange, or peach.
- 1 cup strawberries.
- 3/4 cup of 100 percent juice.
- 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables (spinach, cabbage, lettuce).
- 1/2 cup cooked vegetables (broccoli, carrots, cauliflower).

### What Is a

#### **“Prime Protein” Serving?**

- 1 cup of skim milk or yogurt.
- 1 to 2 ounces of low-fat cheese.
- 2 to 3 ounces of lean meat, poultry, or fish (the size of a deck of cards).
- 4 ounces of soy food.
- 1 egg.
- 1/2 cup of cooked beans or lentils.

Protein helps your body grow and develop.



\*18 U.S.C. 707



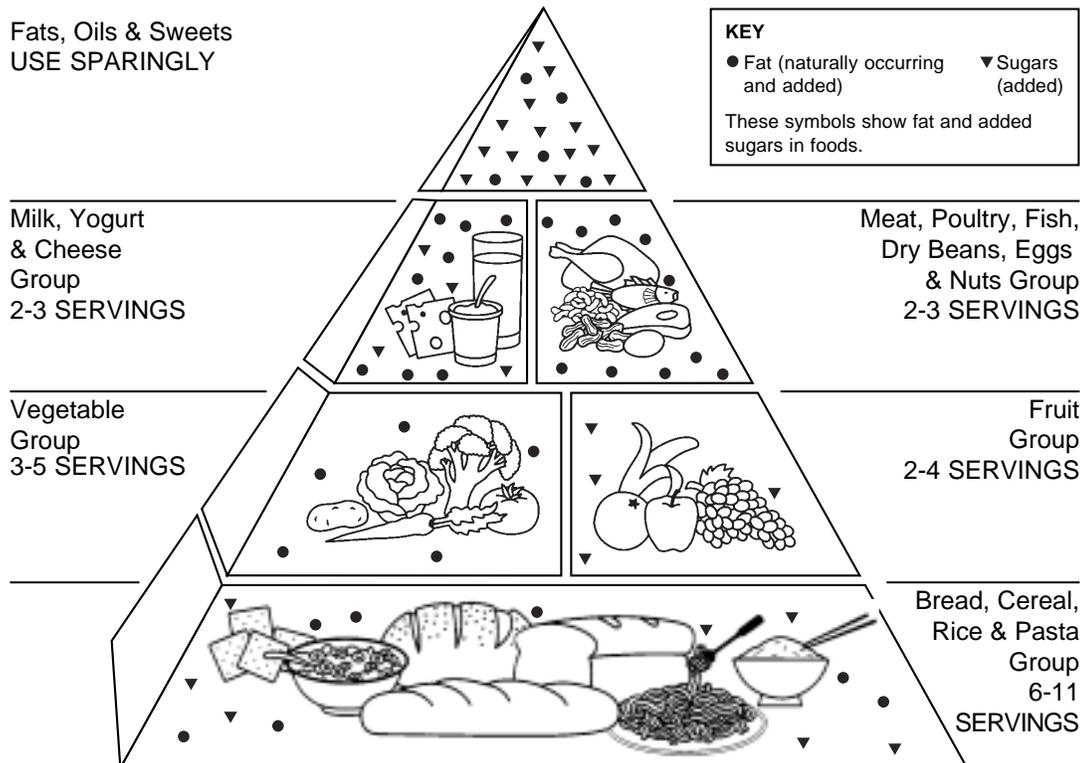
### A Word on Calcium

Dairy foods are high in protein and calcium. Calcium is essential in building and maintaining strong bones. People who do not get enough calcium are at risk of developing osteoporosis later in life. This is a condition in which the bones become weak and brittle. Often people suffer fractures and pain. Calcium can also help you achieve a healthy weight. So, how can you get enough calcium? Milk, yogurt, and cheese are all good sources of calcium. You can also find calcium in broccoli, calcium-fortified orange juice and cereal bars, and fortified soy milk and soy cheese.

### Top It Off

Pyramid Power focuses on healthy choices, such as breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, and lean meats and low-fat dairy products. We often add flavor to these foods with added fats and sweeteners. Try to use fats and sweets in small amounts to “top it off.” Too much fat or sugar is bad for your health, but a little sweet tooth can provide stress relief and pleasure in eating. Just make sure you don’t overdo it. Try to use fats and sweets sparingly, as shown by the small tip of the pyramid. Use low-fat or reduced-fat dressings or mix regular with fat-free to put on salads. Avoid soda and candy, which are loaded with sugar. If you keep your fatty food and sugar intake to a minimum, your body will thank you for it.

**U.S.D.A. Food Guide Pyramid**  
United States Department of Agriculture

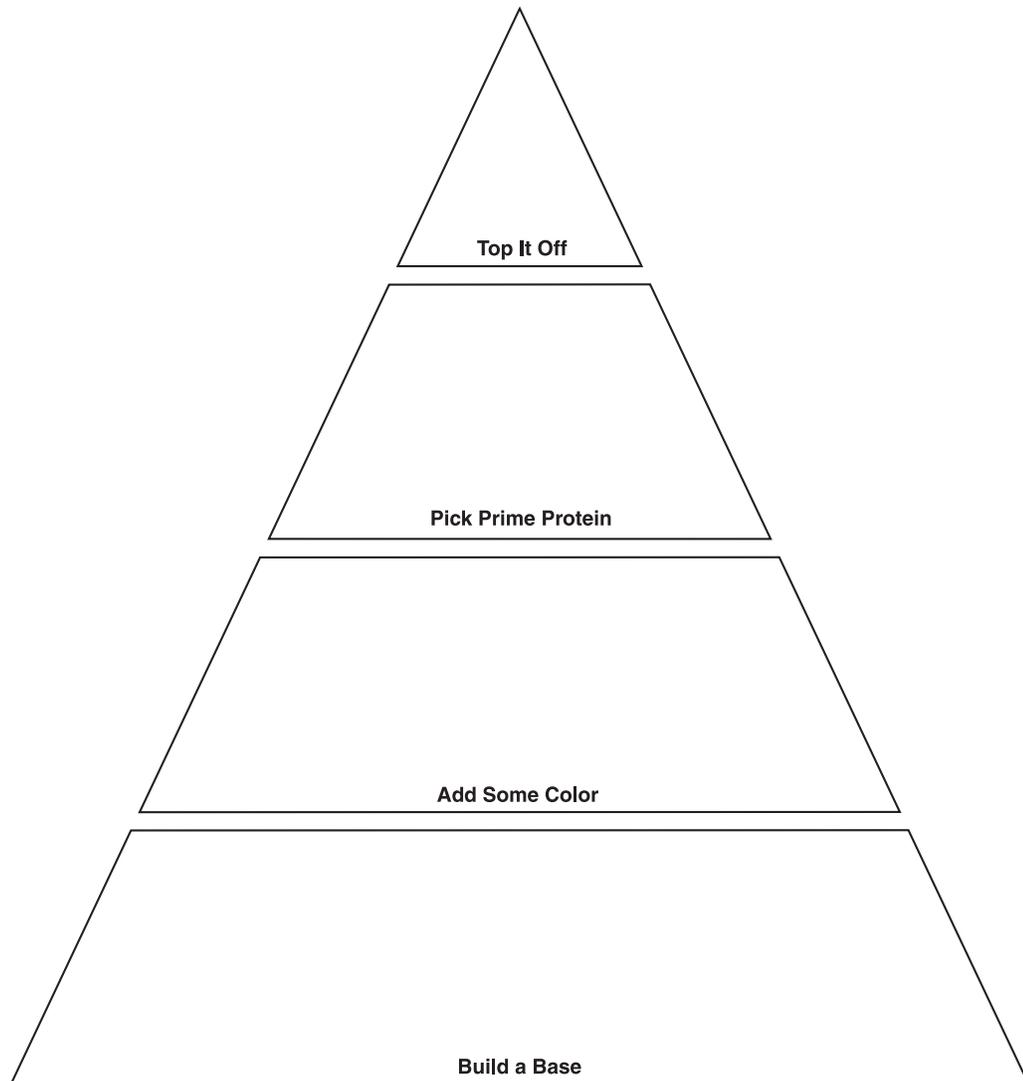


***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet***

**Activity**

Write down everything you ate yesterday, including beverages. Try to estimate food amounts. Complete the Personal Pyramid Profile. Use the Food Guide Pyramid and the portion size reference sheet to help you. Compare your Personal Pyramid Profile with the Food Guide Pyramid. Did you eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables? How many dairy servings did you eat? Did you eat any whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, and brown rice? How much fat and sugar (the tip of the pyramid) did you have? What can you do to improve your pyramid profile?

**CLOVER CAT PERSONAL PYRAMID PROFILE**  
"What do you eat?"



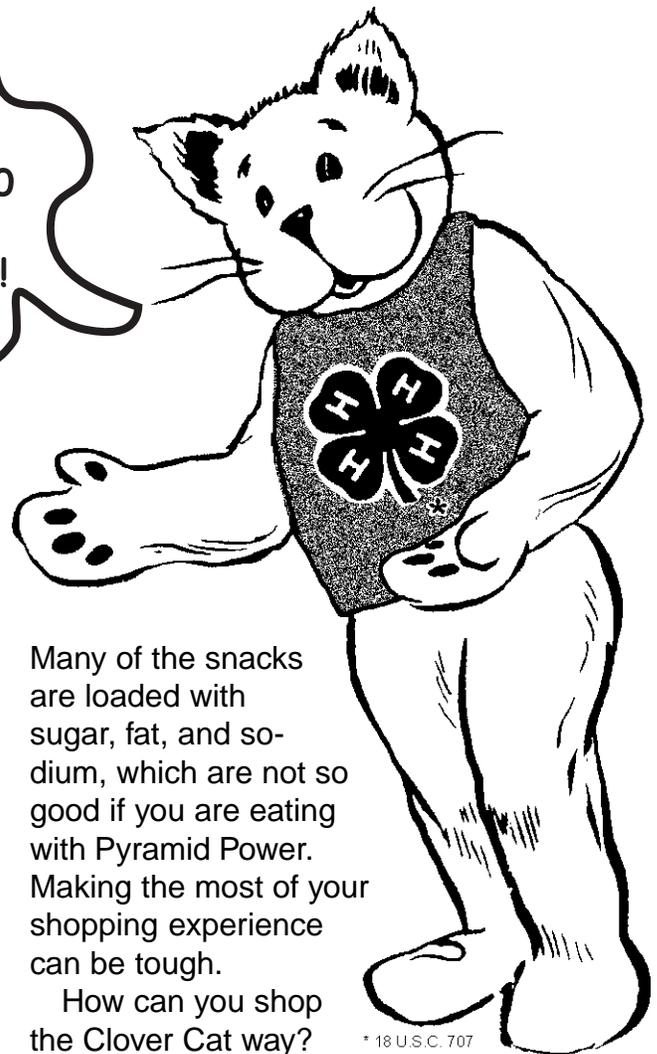
The average family of five spends about \$90 each week on groceries. That's \$4,680 each year!

## Smart Shoppers

Grocery shopping can be an intimidating and expensive experience. Grocery chains and food companies have made the purchasing of food a major event. As soon as you enter the store, you are bombarded with advertisements, sale signs, free samples, price comparisons, and weekly specials. Grocery store advertisements serve the same purpose as television commercials. They are trying to sell you their product and lots of it. And they do a great job, because the average family of five spends about \$90 each week on groceries. That's \$4,680 each year! Shoppers that go into a grocery store blindly, without a list or any item in mind, tend to spend more and purchase more products than intended. However, keeping your grocery bill in check is easy if you take the time to plan out the shopping experience.

## Supermarket Shuffle

If you have ever visited the grocery store with your parents, you know how confusing it can be. So many aisles. So many choices. So little time. The shopper is faced with an endless barrage of products, from cookies and crackers to snack cakes and soda. Grocery stores often place expensive "impulse" items at eye level to encourage shoppers to purchase them. These items often include name brand snacks, drinks, laundry detergents, and cleaning products.



Many of the snacks are loaded with sugar, fat, and sodium, which are not so good if you are eating with Pyramid Power. Making the most of your shopping experience can be tough.

How can you shop the Clover Cat way? \* 18 U.S.C. 707 It's easy! Just take it outside—to the outside aisles, that is. You can find plenty of healthy choices in the inside lanes, such as pasta, rice, cereals, and canned and frozen fruits and vegetables. But you can complete most of your Personal Pyramid shopping by staying in the outside lanes. Milk, cheese, yogurt, and other dairy products; eggs and fresh cuts of meat; bread; and produce are typically found in the outside lanes of most supermarkets. Visit the inside lanes only for the Pyramid foods that can be found there or for an occasional treat. Avoiding the middle lanes can save money, discourage impulse buying, and keep your diet healthy.



## Shopping Tips

- **Look for coupons, rebates, and free offers.** You can easily find sale coupons in local or national papers, magazines, mail, or on the Internet. Coupons can put a major dent in your grocery bill.
- **Don't shop hungry.** If you go to the grocery store feeling hungry, you may buy items you do not need. Eat before going grocery shopping to resist that urge to splurge.
- **Plan menus around sales.** Look for sales and specials, especially meat products, in your local paper. You can plan your weekly menu around sale items and save money.
- **Buy fruits and vegetables in season.** Certain fruits and vegetables, such as berries, melons, tomatoes, and squash can be quite expensive when they are out of season during the late fall and winter months. Enjoy these foods during the spring and summer when they are cheaper. Apples, oranges, bananas, green beans, and other items are generally available all year.
- **Shop at price clubs and discount stores.** Price clubs and discount stores buy their goods in large volume and are often able to offer lower prices to their customers. You can often save even more if you buy large volumes of products. If you have room for a 10-pound tub of peanut butter, go for it! You will save money.
- **Avoid those trips to the convenience store.** Convenience stores generally charge higher prices than the larger chains. If you forget an item while shopping or just need to make a quick stop for one item, it is not a problem. Just don't make it a habit.
- **Use "house" brands when possible.** Many large grocery chains offer food products under their company name. These products are of comparable quality to many national brands and are generally cheaper. Give the house brands a try and see if you can tell the difference.
- **Get the whole family involved.** If everyone is in charge of finding a list of items, you can shorten your time in the grocery store. Just make sure everyone sticks to the list!
- **Make a list.** This is probably the most important tip for grocery shopping. Making a list gives you an outline of what you need, saves money by discouraging impulse buying, and gets you in and out of the store fast. You are more likely to get all the foods you need for a healthy diet and keep your food costs within your budget.

***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet***

***Activity***

Divide into small groups to compose a weekly dinner menu. Each group can create a five-day dinner menu and calculate the cost. Each group should have a selection of coupons and rebate offers. Recalculate the menu cost using the coupons. Compare and contrast the price differences and discuss.

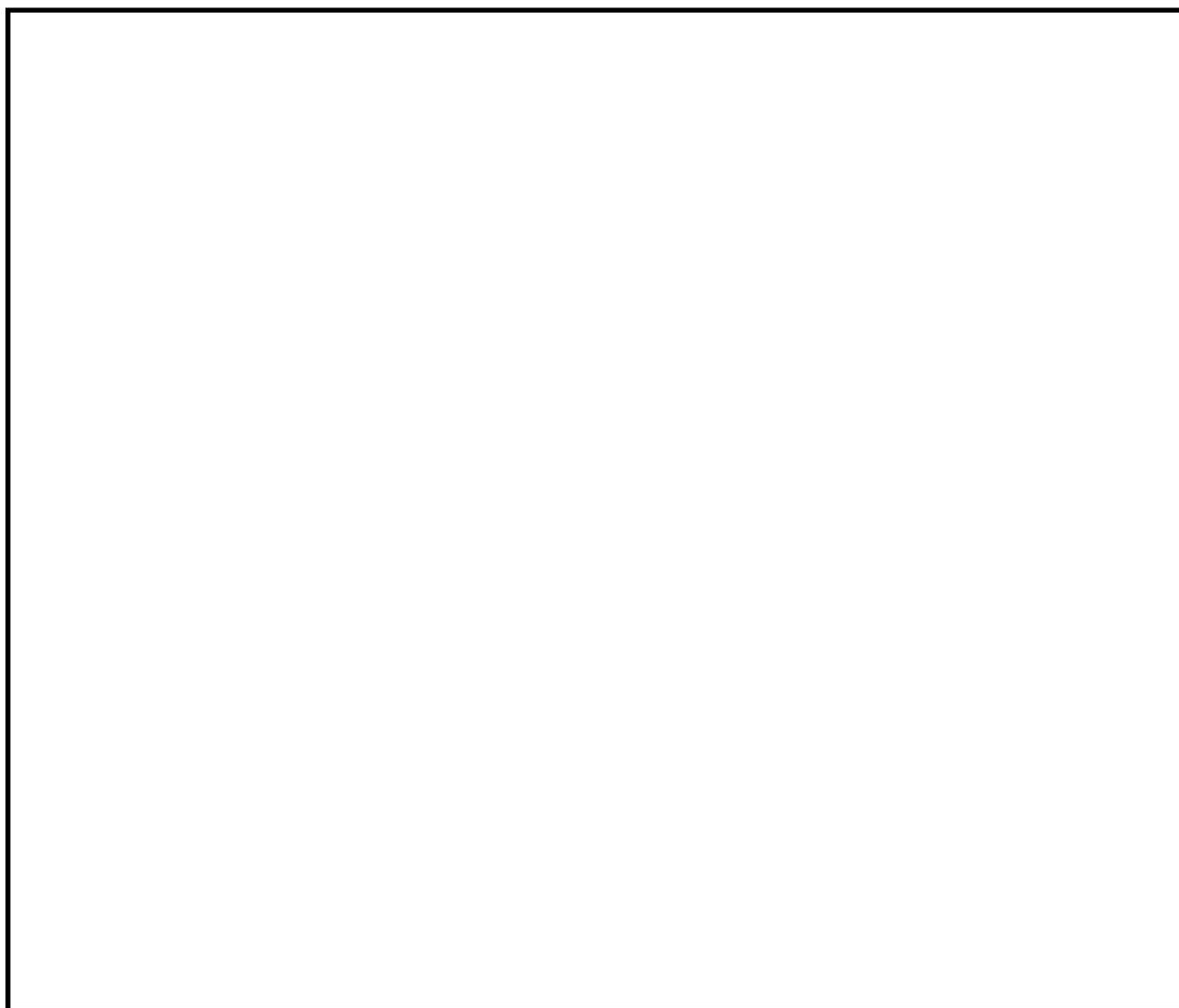


***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet***

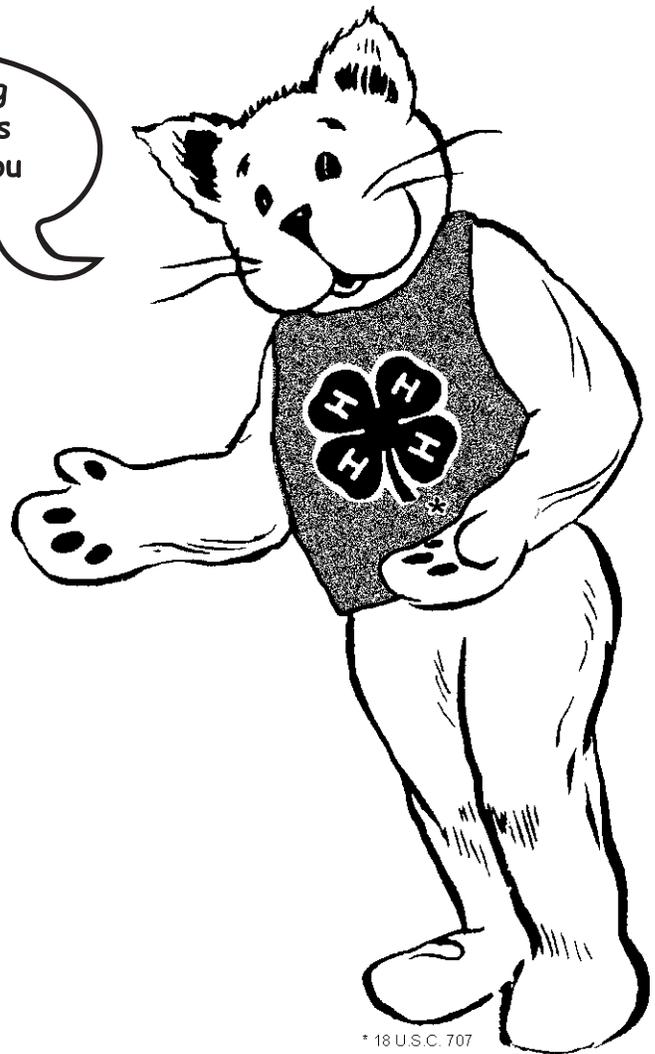
**Activity**

Think about where your family shops for groceries. Do you go to Kroger, Wal-Mart, Sav-A-Lot, or another store? Draw a simple map of the store where your family shops. Think about how the different foods are arranged. You do not have to remember all the aisles but just draw a basic map. Get into groups of three to four and label where the healthy pyramid foods are. Where are the base foods, such as bread, rice, and pasta? Where do you find the colorful fruits and vegetables? Where are the prime proteins? What do you like to top it off?

**Grocery Map**



Picking great-tasting fruits and vegetables can be easy when you use your senses.



## Fresh Produce Makes Sense

If you have been in a grocery store recently, you have probably noticed the large selection available in the produce section. There are more varieties of fruits and vegetables available today than ever before. A simple visit to the apple section can present the consumer with many choices, from Red Delicious to Fuji to Granny Smith. There are many exotic fruits, such as star fruit, Asian pears, ugli fruit, and pineapples, that many people have never experienced. With so many choices, it can be difficult for consumers to know how to pick a good, ripe piece of fruit or vegetable. How can you be a smart shopper for fresh produce? It's easy. Just use common sense! Picking great-tasting fruits and vegetables can be easy when you use your senses.

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## Tips for Picking Produce

- **Look for bright, vibrant colors when choosing produce.** Be on the lookout for bruises, slimy or wrinkled skin (unless it's an ugli fruit), and soft spots.
- **Smell the produce.** Does it smell fresh or sweet? Does it smell old, bad, or rotten?
- **Feel for bruises and mushy spots.** Ripe produce is often firm and crisp to the touch, not limp and rubbery.
- **Listen to a produce manager.** Don't be afraid to ask questions about produce you are not familiar with. Produce managers can be a big help in selecting good, fresh produce. After all, it's their job!

## Check Out These Tips from the United States Department of Agriculture

- Buy produce when it is in season. It will generally be of higher quality and less expensive. Ask the produce manager about in-season produce.
- Buy only what you need. Fruits and vegetables can go bad quickly, so only buy enough to last about one week. Ask the produce manager what produce needs to be refrigerated.

***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Choose Foods for a Healthy Diet***

***Activity***

Have you ever noticed what types of fresh fruits and vegetables are served in the school cafeteria? Divide into groups of four to five. Each group should think of three questions to ask the school foodservice director about how she or he buys and uses fruits and vegetables in your school. Have a meeting with the foodservice director of your school and find out the answers. Where does she buy fruits and vegetables? Does he buy produce in season? How does she use the fruits and vegetables? Over the next week, watch for fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria and try something new.





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### **Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Activate Your Life**

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Did you know that physical activity tends to decrease as you get older? The biggest decline is often seen in the late teen and early adult years. Young people today have more activities to choose from than ever before, from television to computers to video games. Unfortunately, physical activity is often left out of the mix. But it's easy to include daily activity in your life. Any activity is worthwhile as long as it gets you moving. According to researchers, even light to moderate activity (gardening or going for a walk) can improve overall health and decrease your risk of disease. Best of all, studies show that active kids and teens will be active adults. What are you waiting for?

Use the pyramid approach to activate your life. Make activity a daily habit. Try to walk and build strength. Take activity breaks when you have been sitting a while.

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### **Tips for Daily Activity**

- **Focus on the process, not the outcome.** Life-long fitness is a journey. Don't worry about the outcome—just concentrate on participating in a physical activity for 30 minutes most days of the week.
- **Activity equals good health.** Physically active kids and teens tend to have lower blood pressure and higher HDL (good) cholesterol than those who are less active. Daily activity also promotes long-term weight loss and weight maintenance in overweight people.
- **Activity benefits everyone.** Not everyone can be the star quarterback or high-flying basketball standout. However, anyone can benefit from regular exercise. Regular activity reduces your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, and many forms of cancer. Exercise also improves self-esteem and mental health and builds strong bones.
- **Do what you like.** Any activity is a good activity. Organized sports, such as football, basketball, baseball, and soccer, are great for staying in shape and learning how to be part of a team. But there are a number of great activities you can participate in alone or with your friends. Jump rope or take a walk. Do some push-ups and sit-ups. Roller blade or visit a skate park.
- **Fitness can be rewarding in more ways than one.** Physical activity is important for your physical and mental health. It can also be profitable. Start your own neighborhood lawn mowing service (walking, of course) or dog walking enterprise. Help your parents out in the garden or wash their cars. Complete your activity for the day and make a few bucks in the process.

***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Activate Your Life***

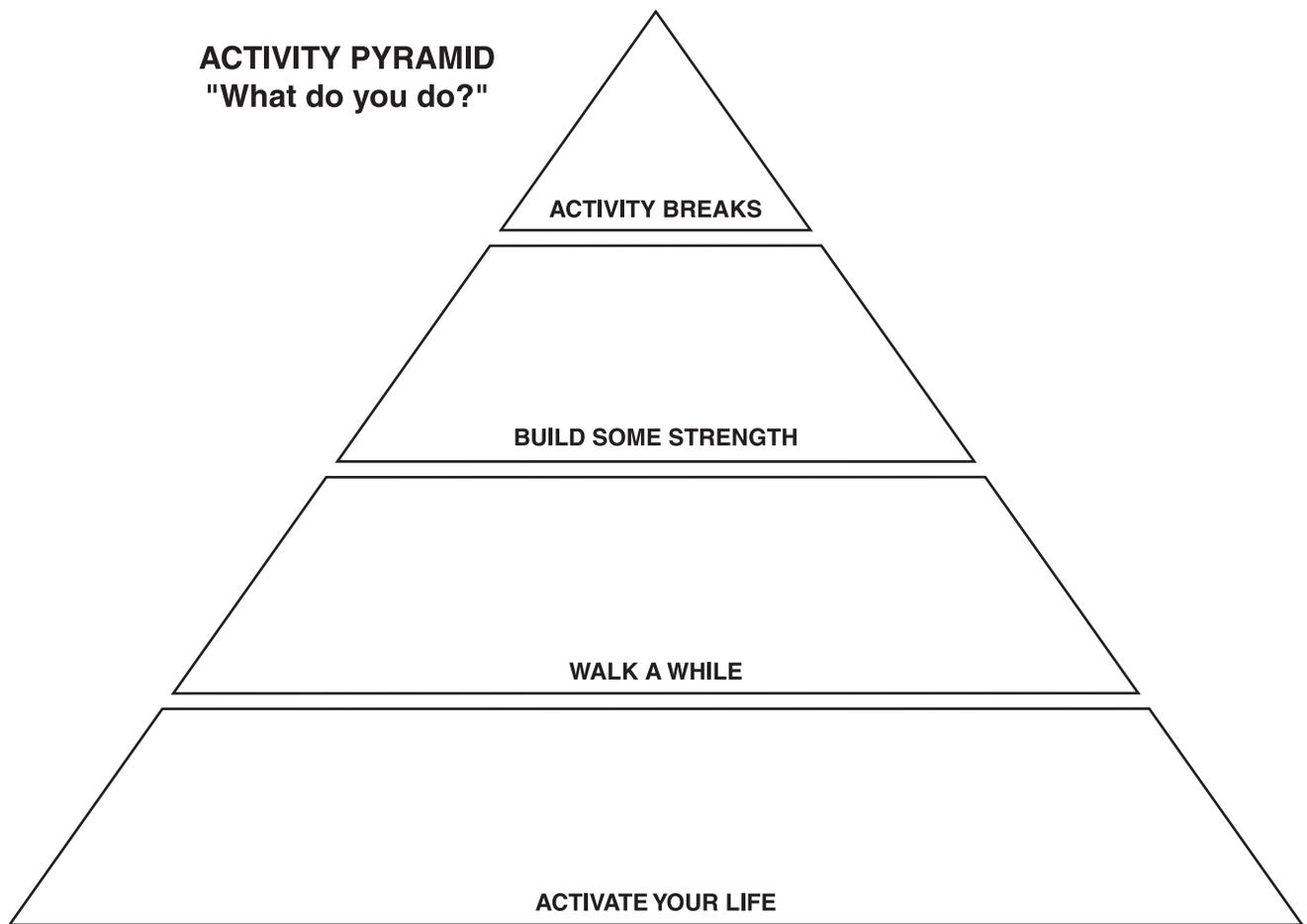
**Activity**

Fill out the “What do you do?” activity pyramid below.

**What Do You Do?**

1. Do you get 30 minutes of activity five or more times per week?
2. Do you walk for at least 20 minutes three or more times per week?
3. Do you do any strength building or aerobic activity three or more times per week?
4. Do you take activity breaks while doing homework or while watching television?

Think of ways you can increase your activity. Is there a sport you have wanted to try? Do some of your friends play basketball or volleyball regularly?



## Move It or Lose It

Building strong muscles is not just for athletes anymore. Strong muscles, tendons, and bones are important for everyone at all ages. Strength training is a great workout and can help you build muscle mass and strength, but it can also help keep you trim and fit. How? Well, muscle is the body's best calorie burner. So the more muscle you have, the more calories you will burn each day. Strength training can also help reduce fat around your internal organs, such as the heart and liver, that you cannot see. This is important to help you maintain a healthy blood pressure and a low risk of heart disease.

What's great is that you can get all the positive health benefits by resistance training two or three times a week for 20 minutes each session. For proper instruction, consult your school's physical education teacher or sports coach. They can supervise your workout and teach you how to use weights and/or weight machines. You can also get a great workout at home using household items for resistance. Use canned goods as hand weights. Do some push-ups or pull-ups.

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## Tips for Working Out

- **Warm up.** Make sure that you warm your body up before beginning strength training. You could walk around the block, jog in place, or jump rope for five minutes.
  - **Take it easy.** If you are just beginning, start out with a light weight, something you can lift at least 12 times but no more than 20. Maybe you need to start out with a can of soup in each hand.
  - **Breathe in, breathe out.** Make sure that you breathe when lifting the weight. It seems crazy, but a lot of people forget to breathe while lifting a weight. Breathe in as you lower the weight, and breathe out as you lift the weight.
  - **Can you spare one minute?** One minute is all it takes to build a muscle. Take three seconds to lift the weight and three seconds to lower the weight. If you lift the weight 12 times, that's 72 seconds.
  - **One set is all it takes.** Many studies have shown that just one set of an exercise builds muscle. What is a set? If you lift a weight 12 times, that is a set. Not so bad, huh? Complete one set of eight exercises for a great workout.
  - **Increase the weight as you get stronger.** After lifting that soup can for a few weeks, you will probably find that you are stronger and able to handle a heavier load. If that's the case, it's time to move up in weight. Put away the soup can and move up to a two-liter bottle of soda or, if you are really strong, a gallon of water. Save an empty milk gallon jug and fill it with water. This way, you're recycling and building strength.
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## **Walk a While**

Do you know a family member or friend who walks for exercise? Do you walk for exercise? Do you know the benefits of walking? Let's look at some facts and benefits of walking.

Walking is one of the most popular ways to become more active. You can walk with a friend or choose to spend some time alone. You can walk with family members, friends, or an animal friend. Walking can be done while you talk or while you enjoy some silence. This section will help you learn more about the benefits of walking, how to walk safely and effectively, and what it takes to walk across Kentucky.

In a recent survey, nearly half of Kentucky adults (45 percent) reported no leisure time physical activity. We spend a lot of time in front of televisions, computers, and video games or in cars while we eat fast food. We often wish there was more time to spend with family and friends, or we might long for some time alone. The lack of physical activity and the stress of our over-scheduled lives are taking a toll on the health of Kentucky children, teens, and adults.

### ***Walking Your Way to Wellness***

Walking may offer a way for you to become more active, enjoy better health, and spend more time with others or by yourself. Regular walking can decrease your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and perhaps some forms of cancer. Walking seems to promote "brain fitness," leading to a more positive outlook and greater mental agility. People who walk tend to have lower blood pressure and a decreased risk of stroke. Walking strengthens bones and muscles and can help you control your weight. Walking is a good way to reduce stress, increase energy levels, and may even help you sleep better at night.

## **Walking Well**

Warming up before starting your walking program will help prevent injuries. Ease into it by walking slowly for five minutes and then stretch for a few minutes. Helpful stretches include head and arm circles and hip and leg stretches. Walk at an easy pace during the last five to 10 minutes of your routine to let your body cool down.

Proper form will make your walk easier and more comfortable, helping you get the most from your exercise routine.

- Stand up straight, keep your eyes forward, and keep your chin parallel to the ground.
- Keep your arms at a 90-degree angle and close to your body.
- Hit the ground with your heel first, roll through the step, and push off with your toe.
- Try to take a step that's a comfortable length for you, not too short or too long.
- Walk at the right pace, taking time to warm up and cool down.

Try to walk at least three times a week. During the first week you may want to warm up by walking slowly for five minutes and then stretch, walk briskly for five more minutes, and then cool down for five minutes by walking slowly. In the following weeks, increase your brisk walking by two to three minutes a week until you can walk at a fast pace for 30 minutes to one hour. You should try to walk at least 30 minutes, three to five days each week.

Current recommendations for good health state that you should be moderately active for a total of 30 minutes at least five days per week.

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## **Tips for Walking Safely**

- Walk in the daytime.
  - Walk with a friend or group.
  - Do not wear headphones that prevent you from hearing potential dangers.
  - Pay attention to your surroundings and be cautious.
  - Walk on sidewalks and stay away from high traffic areas.
  - Wear bright, reflective clothing and shoes.
  - Carry identification and water.
  - Do not assume that cars see can or have seen you.
  - Consider carrying a cell phone or change to use a public phone for emergencies.
  - Wear comfortable, well-fitted shoes and socks.
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## **Tips for Making Walking a Part of Your Regular Routine**

- Avoid automatically turning on the television when you get home.
  - Establish regular, limited hours for computer use and video games.
  - Get into the habit of changing into your walking clothes when you get home. Or, try walking in the morning.
  - Try walking when you need to run errands or get somewhere.
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### ***Walking, Your Way***

Before you begin a walking routine, take some time to think about why you want to walk. You probably want to be more active in order to feel better and to become healthier. Consider what other goals you might be able to accomplish while walking. Maybe you would relish some time alone to think or let your mind wander. You may have a friend, family member, or pet that you would like to spend more time with. Perhaps you would like to visit the library more often. Give careful consideration to these additional goals. You may want to walk alone sometimes and with company at other times. Try to establish regular times for walking to keep yourself committed and to help you schedule walking with others. Finding ways to make walking work for you will help you stay committed to being more active.

## Walk across Kentucky

How many miles would you need to log in order to walk across Kentucky? The Commonwealth of Kentucky is approximately 420 miles wide from the most western to eastern points. Here are some interesting mile markers with approximate distances to help you track your progress if you decide to take this route to walk across Kentucky (for a total of 420 miles):

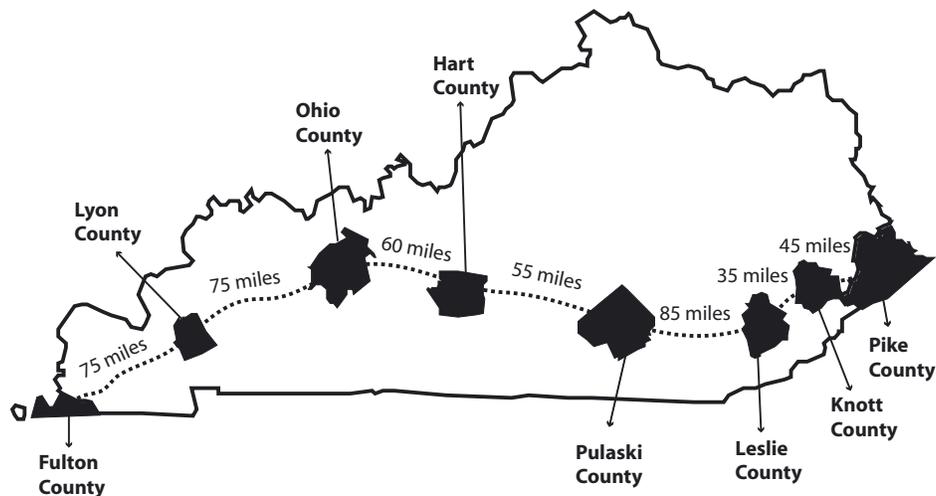
- Sassafras Ridge (Fulton County) to Kuttawa (Lyon County): 75 miles.
- Kuttawa (Lyon County) to Beaver Dam (Ohio County): 75 miles.
- Beaver Dam (Ohio County) to Horse Cave (Hart County): 75 miles.
- Horse Cave (Hart County) to Indian Hills (Pulaski County): 55 miles.
- Indian Hills (Pulaski County) to Thousandsticks (Leslie County): 85 miles.
- Thousandsticks (Leslie County) to Pippa Passes (Knott County): 35 miles.
- Pippa Passes (Knott County) to Stopover (Pike County): 45 miles.

If you can walk a mile in about 15 minutes, then you are covering about four miles

per hour. If you walk for one hour on five days of the week, you will log 20 miles per week. At the rate, it will take you 21 weeks to walk 420 miles, the equivalent of walking across Kentucky.

From Pike County in the east to Fulton County in the west, Kentucky has a beautiful variety of scenery with mountains, rivers, and lakes. Our state has an abundance of forests, wildflowers, and birds to watch while you walk. Kentucky State Parks and other recreational areas have hiking and walking trails.

Becoming a walker can open your eyes to a new way of seeing things. One of the often-unexpected benefits of walking is how much more you will see of the world around you. You may meet new neighbors. You can watch new buildings take shape. You will have the opportunity to witness nature's ever-changing seasons. You may also find that walking helps you to better see inside yourself. Many people find they have creative ideas or suddenly see a solution to a long-standing problem when they walk alone and have time to relax. An open mind and an active body can take you wherever you need to be.



***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Activate Your Life***

**Activity**

Using the week-long chart below, think of and write down the activities you are involved with this week. Include school; social obligations; time to do homework; practice for sports, music, or other activities; and anything else that you do during a week. Now, think about when you could add a walk. Try to pick four times throughout the week where you could walk for about 30 minutes. Remember, this could be with a friend, a family member, or a pet.

Also, think about things that may prevent you from walking. These things that may prevent you from walking are called barriers. Get into groups of three or four and discuss the possible barriers. As a group, see if you can help each other think of ways to overcome the barriers.

**Activity Worksheet for “Walk across Kentucky”**

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Sunday</b>			
<b>Monday</b>			
<b>Tuesday</b>			
<b>Wednesday</b>			
<b>Thursday</b>			
<b>Friday</b>			
<b>Saturday</b>			

<b>Possible Barriers :</b>	<b>Possible Solutions:</b>





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### **Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well**

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Leading a balanced life improves your sense of well-being. School, family, work, and fun should all be a part of life. But you should make time to activate your life, to learn to eat well, and to enjoy life.

### **Laughter is the Best Medicine**

Humor is likely a part of everyone's daily life. And for good reason. A good laugh takes us away from the stresses of the day and lets us enjoy the moment. The word humor is derived from the Greeks, who believed that physical and mental balance produced "good humor." Hearing a joke or reading a funny cartoon lifts your spirits and can pull you out of a bad mood. But did you know that humor can also improve your physical health?

Scientists have found that laughing affects most of the body's systems. It can increase your respiratory, or breathing, activity and your oxygen rate. This means your body can better deliver oxygen to where it is needed, making you feel more active and alert. Laughter increases muscle

activity and heart rate and the release of endorphins. Endorphins give us a natural feeling of well-being. Our bodies release more endorphins when our senses experience something pleasant, like the sight of a newborn baby, the smell of good food, finishing a good workout, or laughing at a funny joke. This gives us a moment of joy and a break from stress, which can increase endorphins. When you look at the facts, laughter can put you on a path to better physical and mental health.

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### **Tips to Help Your Mood**

- **Cut out cartoons from the newspaper and post them in your locker or bedroom.** This will give you a quick "pick-me-up" between classes and after a hard day at school.
  - **Decorate your room with things you enjoy.** Hang posters of your favorite musician or athlete. Stuffed animals and humorous cards or stickers will liven up your room. Place a funny screen saver on your computer.
  - **Spend time with people with a good sense of humor.** If your friends and family can make you laugh, you are in great company!
  - **Spend time reading or watching funny material.** Read a funny novel or comic book. Watch a funny movie or television show.
  - **Don't forget to laugh at yourself.** Sometimes we take ourselves too seriously. There is nothing like a good joke to put things in perspective. Remember that a day with laughter is a good day.
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***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well***

***Activity***

Divide into groups. As a class, discuss ways to incorporate humor into your daily life. Each group should come up with five ways to add more laughter to their day. Each student can answer the following questions before the group project.

1. Do I laugh at least once every day?
2. What do I find funny?
3. Do I tell jokes that may be offensive to others?
4. What makes me happy? Sports? A good movie? Spending time with my friends and family?

As a class, discuss ways to incorporate humor into your daily life and include your ideas. Listen to everyone else—they may have some good ideas that will work for you.



## Read Any Good Books Lately?

How often do you take the time to read? In today's busy world, it seems that reading a book, comic, or short story is a thing of the past. Who wants to read when there are video games to play, e-mails to send, and television to watch? You do! Reading is time away from the stresses of the world. Reading is time by yourself and time with yourself. Do you ever read for enjoyment and not just because of a homework assignment? What are you interested in? Mystery and suspense? Romance? Sports? History or science? It's a sure bet that you can find a good book on a topic that interests you. Reading is not just a form of entertainment; it's also education.

Reading helps you understand the purpose of the printed word and helps us understand the connection between the printed and written word. Reading allows you to absorb information about the world around you and how it works. Reading improves your vocabulary and understanding of words and phrases, which will benefit you in future classes, work, and life. In a recent study, researchers showed that reading a newspaper or comic book exposed the reader to three times as many rare words. These texts also used fewer of the 5,000 most commonly used words compared to television and general conversation. So pick up a book and get going!

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## Tips for Reading Well

- **Check out the library.** The school or local library has hundreds of books you can read. If you are having trouble finding something, ask the librarian to help you. Tell the librarian the kind of stories you like and he or she can make suggestions. You can also ask friends, family members, and teachers about books they would recommend.
- **Find a nice, quiet spot to read.** It is hard to focus on your reading with a lot of distracting noise or the television turned on. Read in your bedroom or find a quiet place outside.
- **Get into the flow.** When you read something you enjoy, you get into a "flow." When you're in the flow, you slip into another world, and the world around you seems as if it doesn't exist. Reading a good story is like stepping into another universe.
- **Pick up a newspaper.** Your local newspaper is a great resource for finding out about local events, sports, entertainment, and current events. Newspapers also expose you to a variety of new words and viewpoints.
- **Make crossword puzzles a daily habit.** Completing crossword puzzles will expand your vocabulary and keep your mind sharp. They are also a great way to relax and entertain yourself.
- **Read something for enjoyment every day.** Try to read the newspaper every morning. Find a book you are interested in and read a chapter each day. Reading for pleasure will ease tension and provide a break from your busy day.

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**Activity**

Write a short story about one of the topics below for other readers to enjoy. After the stories are completed, pass the stories out to different students to read. Ask each student to reflect on the story they read and on the act and art of writing. Keep the authors a secret so that you can be more honest in your writing and in discussing the stories. Do not be critical of the other stories but give positive feedback on them.

**Potential Topics**

- My role model.
- My favorite thing to do.
- My idea of a perfect day.
- What I want to be.
- My way to wellness.

Almost any topic would be fine. Encourage the students to write about what they are interested in, including a fictional short story.



## Too Much Time on My Hands

If you are like most people, you just don't seem to have enough hours in each day. You have to hurry to get ready for school on time. You run from class to class. You hurry to after-school activities. You try to complete your homework before your favorite television show and then it's off to bed. You need help! You need better time management.

Good time management skills will help in all areas of your life, from school to sports to family and leisure activities. When you develop good time management skills, you will no longer be constantly late or rushed, nor will you forget that test tomorrow!

Time management involves setting priorities in your life and learning how to plan. Developing a set routine will allow you to stay on top of what needs to get done. Set a regular time to study in the evenings. Try to wake up at the same time each day. Schedule tasks and activities that you do not like first so you will not put them off. This gives yourself a sense of accomplishment. Managing your life will be easier when you can manage your time. Ask yourself the following questions.

- Do you always feel rushed?
- Do you leave tasks and chores incomplete?
- Do you feel as if you are working hard but not accomplishing much?
- Do you try to do several things at once?
- Do you have trouble deciding what to do next?

If you answered "yes" to more than one question, then you may need to develop better time management skills.

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## Tips for Time Management

- **Stay with a task until it is completed.** If time allows, always try to finish a job. It will ease your mind and allow you to focus on the next task at hand.
  - **Divide large jobs into a series of smaller jobs.** If a particular job is too tough or too time consuming to finish at one time, break it up into smaller jobs. Write the first page of that big paper on one day, and write a little more each day until it is finished.
  - **Avoid distractions.** Focus on the job at hand. If it requires silence and privacy, get away from annoying noise and anyone who might interrupt you.
  - **Keep it positive.** Think how good you will feel when you have completed the task. Remind yourself that each part of the job you complete is one less part you have to worry about.
  - **Make a "to do" list of things you need to finish each day.** Check off each job as it is completed. This will give you a sense of accomplishment and completion.
  - **Expect the unexpected.** Things do not always go as we plan. Understand that interruptions in your schedule can and will happen. Learn to deal with problems and adjust your day accordingly.
  - **Reward yourself.** We all know what "all work and no play" can do to us. Buy something you have been saving for after you complete that big assignment. Treat yourself to a good movie after mowing the lawn for your parents.
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***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well***

**Activity**

Divide into groups and discuss the time management techniques mentioned on the previous page. Each group should discuss other ways to save time or to manage their daily lives. Complete the day planner for your next day's activities.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**PLAN FOR THE DAY**

TIME	DESCRIPTION

**THINGS TO DO TODAY**

DONE	DESCRIPTION



## Taking Time

We live in a world where time always seems to be lacking, but slowing down and taking care of ourselves is an important part of staying well. Here are some ideas to help you:

- Learn to enjoy moving. Physical activity can have a very positive influence on mood and appetite. Activate your life to be truly well.
  - Make time to get out into nature. Hiking, boating, swimming, or just sitting in the great outdoors can help us gain perspective in our place in the universe.
  - Do something daily for your spirit. Inspirational reading or writing in a journal are just two examples. Visit your local library or bookstore to enjoy many books to help you nurture the spiritual side of your life.
  - Use a sense of humor to help you through difficult times. Humor can indeed be the best medicine. Laughing and smiling have a positive effect on you and those around you.
  - Take time every day to be “body aware.” For example, when you wake up or take a shower, try stretching or moving all parts of your body.
  - Use visual cues in your home, locker, or at school to remind you to take time to be well. They can be an ever-changing environment of encouragement to support you on your way to wellness.
  - Take time to think about what you value: family, friends, school, time to read, and learning something new. Are you living in a way that supports what you value? Are your behaviors helping you reach your goals in life?
- Occasionally take time to become completely absorbed in something other than yourself. Some people do this by cooking, sewing, painting, or playing music. You could also try dancing or reading—whatever strikes your fancy.
  - Take time to be with family, friends, and others in your community. Being with people with whom you have something in common, doing volunteer work, and belonging to a group can greatly enrich your life.
  - Finally, take time to rest and sleep. You probably know how many hours of sleep you need to feel your best, so make an effort to get to bed on time. Many of us don’t get enough sleep during the week and try to catch up over the weekend. You may find that you’ll feel better and get more done if you take time each night to get enough sleep.

Slowing down and taking care of ourselves is an important part of staying well.



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As recently as 50 years ago, people were more physically active but had little time for recreation. They also had strong ties to family and community. Now we have the luxury of choosing our activities and, in some cases, our company. Take advantage of what today's world has to offer by taking time to be well.

## **Journal Writing**

Have you ever kept a journal or a diary? Writing in a journal or a diary can be therapeutic and relaxing. Dr. Sam Quick of the University of Kentucky's Department of Family Studies says that there are several reasons to do journal writing including:

- Gaining perspective.
- Clearing the mind.
- Solving problems.
- Generating new ideas.
- Gaining insight.
- Reflection.
- Self-expression.

If you are stressed, trying to work out a problem, or just need some time to yourself, journaling is a great idea. All you need is a pen or pencil and a notebook or journal. You can write about anything—your day, your feelings, a situation, something that makes you mad or stresses you out, or an object, such as a tree or a car. Let your writing just flow without worrying about grammar. You can keep your journal just for yourself.

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***Activity***

Spend 15 minutes writing about anything. Do not worry about grammar or punctuation. Simply write. You can write abstractly or about something that just happened. When the 15 minutes are up, stop writing. Did you write about things that you did not realize you were thinking? Try journaling a few times over the next week. You may find that it helps you clarify your thoughts or bring things into perspective.



## **Food Security**

Do you know what food security is? Food security is, “Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways . . .” (Nord, 1999). There are many people in the world, the United States, and even Kentucky who do not have enough food to eat. According to the USDA, 9.7 percent of U.S. households and 8.4 percent of Kentucky households are food insecure (USDA, 1999). Often people or families who are food insecure do not have enough money to supply enough food for health at all times; therefore, poverty is one main issue of hunger and food insecurity. Not having enough food or money to buy food can be very stressful. The poverty rate in the United States is 13.6 percent (USDA, 1999). In 1996 the poverty rate in Kentucky was 17.9 percent (Kentucky Department of Public Health).

It is interesting to note that Kentucky has a food insecurity rate lower than the national average but a higher poverty rate. Can you think of any reasons why this is so? Some experts speculate that one reason may be that the cost of housing is lower in Kentucky than in other parts of the country (Nord, 1999), allowing a larger percentage of the income to be spent on food.

Having the right amounts and types of food is very important for health and wellness. Without appropriate food, it is difficult to have the energy to go to school, to work, and to play. Food is essential for growth and maintenance of the body.

Additionally, not having food can increase stress and anxiety for individuals and families. Therefore, a lack of food can affect nutritional status, activity level, and stress level.

What can we do to help? Have you ever participated in a food drive? Is there a food bank in your county or city? Giving of your time to others not only helps the people in need but can also give you a sense of community or happiness.

## **Community Wellness**

When we consider other people and their needs and then act in a kind manner, it often boosts our own sense of well-being. Understanding and helping others is beneficial to the world, the community, and the individual. There are many things we can do to improve the lives of those around us. Often just being kind and remembering the importance of each person can improve a community. Try saying “hello” to many people, even those you do not know. Try to recognize when someone needs help. Can you hold open a door? Can you help someone carry a heavy load or walk someone’s dog? We sometimes hear of random acts of kindness. These acts can include any kind act that helps another human or animal. Random acts of kindness may seem small but may really make someone’s day.

There are also many ways in which we can volunteer to help different organizations. Think about your community. Can you think of something that needs to be done? Think about your interests and strengths. Do you like animals? Are you good with children? Do you enjoy talking with older people? Often, our own interests can lead us to volunteer work. Maybe you can help watch children at a church or visit with people in a nursing home. If you like animals, maybe you can volunteer at an animal shelter. The possibilities are boundless.

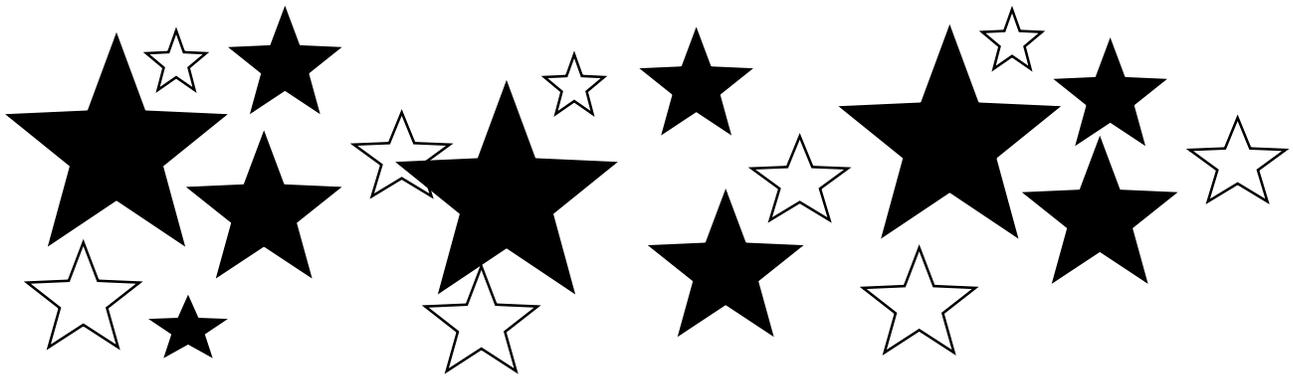
***The Clover Cat Way to Wellness: Time to Be Well***

***Activity***

As a group, discuss how to plan a food drive. How could we collect food? What theme could we use? Is there an upcoming holiday, a homecoming game, or other event? What supplies do we need? How would we market the food drive (posters, fliers, announcements, etc.)? Will we leave a bin out all the time or collect food only during certain times? Will we have a goal of a certain amount of food to collect, or will we just collect for a certain amount of days? Is there a food bank in your county that can distribute the collected food? How will you get the food to the food bank?

Find out about food distribution centers where you live. How does one access food if they are in need?





## Reach for the Stars

It is important to set and accomplish goals. Whether you are trying to break a personal record in the mile run or save up for that new snowboard, setting a goal will give you something to shoot for. Achieving a goal makes you feel successful, and when you feel successful in an activity, you are more likely to continue the activity. Do you like to run? Determine your own personal record in the mile run and try to break it. Set a realistic long-term goal and a series of easier-to-reach short-term goals. For example, if you can run one mile in 15 minutes, a long-term goal of 10 minutes is realistic but seems impossible. Break your long-term goal into a series of shorter goals. Aim for 14 minutes, then 13, then 12, and so on. If you stay with it, eventually you can reach that goal.

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## Tips for Reaching Goals

- **Write your goal(s) down on paper.** It is easier to focus on your goal when it is staring you in the face. Out of sight, out of mind!
  - **Gather information about how to attain your goal.** Read a magazine or ask someone who has experience with the goal you are working on. Being educated can only help you achieve your goal that much sooner.
  - **Focus on your everyday progress.** A long-term goal may seem impossible to achieve, so think about success in terms of daily improvement. A journey of many miles begins with one step.
  - **Know what works and what does not work.** Learn from past mistakes.
  - **Once you achieve a goal, set another.** It's important to challenge yourself. Strive for constant improvement.
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