

# Wellness

## Wednesday



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## Rucking' Is The Latest Walking Trend You Need To Try. Here's Why.

Walking has always been a beloved and accessible form of exercise, offering numerous benefits for both physical and mental well-being. From improved heart health to better sleep, a simple stroll can do wonders for our overall fitness and mood. However, as fitness enthusiasts and health-conscious individuals continuously seek to elevate their workout routines, a new trend has emerged that adds an exciting twist to the traditional walking experience - 'rucking.'



### What is Rucking?

Rucking, a term derived from the military training regimen, refers to the act of walking while carrying a weighted backpack or rucksack. This simple yet effective exercise combines the cardiovascular benefits of walking with the resistance training advantages of carrying additional weight. By incorporating this unique approach, individuals can challenge their bodies in new ways, targeting muscle groups and enhancing overall fitness.

### The Origins of Rucking

The concept of rucking has its roots firmly planted in military training practices. As soldiers are often required to carry heavy equipment and gear during long marches, the military has long recognized the value of this type of physical activity. Rucking, or 'ruck marching,' as it's known in the military, has been a staple of endurance training for generations of service members, preparing them for the physical demands of combat and field operations.

### The Benefits of Rucking

Rucking offers a multitude of benefits that make it an attractive addition to any fitness regimen. From building strength and endurance to improving posture and mental well-being, this exercise provides a well-rounded approach to overall health and wellness.

### Resistance Training and Muscle Building

One of the primary advantages of rucking is its ability to incorporate resistance training into a walking routine. By carrying a weighted backpack or rucksack, individuals engage their muscles in a more challenging way, stimulating growth and development. This is particularly beneficial for individuals looking to maintain or build muscle mass, especially as they age and face natural declines in muscle strength.

## Cardiovascular Endurance

In addition to the resistance training benefits, rucking also enhances cardiovascular endurance. The act of walking with added weight requires the heart to work harder, pumping blood more efficiently and improving overall cardiac health. This can lead to lower blood pressure, improved heart rate, and increased overall cardiovascular fitness.

## Posture and Back Strength

Rucking with a weighted backpack improves posture and strengthens back muscles by engaging core and back muscles to maintain balance and stability, beneficial especially for those with sedentary lifestyles.

## Mental Health Benefits

Rucking not only provides physical benefits but also offers mental health advantages. The act of exercising outdoors, in the fresh air and natural sunlight, can help reduce stress, improve mood, and boost overall well-being. Additionally, the repetitive nature of rucking can have a meditative effect, allowing individuals to clear their minds and find a sense of mental clarity.

## Getting Started with Rucking

Starting a rucking routine is relatively straightforward and accessible for individuals of all fitness levels. The key is to begin gradually and listen to your body's needs.

## Choosing the Right Gear

The most important piece of equipment for rucking is the backpack or rucksack. It's recommended to use a purpose-built rucking pack, as these are designed with features like padded shoulder straps and a reinforced frame to distribute the weight evenly. However, you can also start with a regular backpack, as long as it fits properly and doesn't cause discomfort.

## Determining the Right Weight

The amount of weight you carry in your rucksack will depend on your fitness level and experience. Beginners should start with a lighter load, such as 5-10 pounds, and gradually increase the weight over time as their strength and endurance improve. More experienced individuals may be able to handle heavier loads, such as 20-30 pounds, but it's essential to listen to your body and avoid pushing too hard too fast.

## Incorporating Rucking into Your Routine

Rucking can be added to your workout routine by starting with short distances and increasing intensity over time. It can be included in daily walks or used as a warm-up or cool-down activity.

## Rucking Safety and Precautions

As with any exercise, it's essential to prioritize safety when incorporating rucking into your routine. Proper form, gradual progression, and attentiveness to your body's signals are crucial to avoid injury and ensure a positive experience.

'Rucking' has emerged as a captivating and versatile fitness trend that offers a unique twist on the classic walking exercise. By incorporating weighted backpacks or rucksacks, individuals can challenge their bodies in new ways, targeting muscle groups, improving cardiovascular endurance, and enhancing overall physical and mental well-being. Whether you're a seasoned fitness enthusiast or just starting your wellness journey, rucking can be a valuable addition to your routine, providing a refreshing and engaging approach to achieving your health and fitness goals.



# SWEET POTATO SALAD



## INGREDIENTS

### Sweet Potatoes:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups, 20 ounces total)
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt, and black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup red onion, diced
- 4 cups baby arugula
- 4 ounces Haas avocado, cubed

### For the salad dressing:

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus 1 teaspoon
- 1 1/2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey, or agave for vegan
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus 1/8th teaspoon
- 1 teaspoon cumin

Crafting a tasty and nutritious salad can be a delightful culinary journey, and this sweet potato salad stands out as a shining star. This vibrant dish blends the natural sweetness of roasted sweet potatoes with the creamy richness of avocado, the peppery bite of arugula, and the tangy kick of a homemade vinaigrette. Whether enjoyed as a satisfying main course or a flavorful side, this versatile salad is sure to captivate your taste buds and leave you craving more.

### THE SWEET POTATO

Sweet potatoes are a nutritional powerhouse, brimming with an array of essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. These vibrant root vegetables are renowned for their high content of beta-carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A, a vital nutrient for maintaining healthy vision, immune function, and skin. Additionally, sweet potatoes are a rich source of fiber, providing a sense of fullness and supporting digestive health.

### THE CREAMY AVOCADO EMBRACE

Avocado is a perfect pairing for sweet potatoes, as its creamy texture and rich, nutty flavor complement the sweetness of the roasted potatoes. Avocados are also a nutritional powerhouse, boasting heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, fiber, and a host of essential vitamins and minerals.

### Nutrition Information

Serving: 2 cups, Calories: 290 kcal, Carbohydrates: 35 g, Protein: 3.5 g, Fat: 16 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Sodium: 543.5 mg, Fiber: 7 g, Sugar: 8.5 g





## INSTRUCTIONS



## HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Preheat the oven to 400F.
2. Place the sweet potato cubes on a baking sheet. Drizzle with the olive oil and toss. In a small bowl, stir together the paprika, garlic powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt and black pepper.
3. Sprinkle the spice mixture over the potatoes and toss to combine. Bake 13-15 minutes, toss then bake for additional 13-15 minutes, or until tender.
4. While the sweet potato is cooking, mix the salad dressing together in a large bowl and add the onions.
5. Remove the roasted sweet potatoes from the oven and while still hot, toss them into the large bowl with the salad dressing, then let them cool at least 5 minutes.
6. Once cool, add the arugula, 1 teaspoon olive oil and 1/8 teaspoon salt and toss well.
7. Divide 4 bowls, adjust salt and pepper to taste then top with 1 ounce avocado in each bowl.

### ADJUSTING THE DRESSING

The vinaigrette can also be tailored to your liking. If you prefer a tangier dressing, you can increase the amount of apple cider vinegar. For a sweeter version, add a bit more honey. You can also experiment with different herbs and spices, such as cumin, chili powder, or even a touch of Dijon mustard, to create unique flavor combinations.

### INCORPORATING PROTEIN

To transform the sweet potato salad into a more substantial meal, you can add a protein component, such as grilled chicken, roasted tofu, or even hard-boiled eggs. This addition will make the salad more filling and balanced, making it an ideal choice for a hearty lunch or a light dinner.

<https://www.self.com/gallery/full-body-hiit-workout-20-minutes>

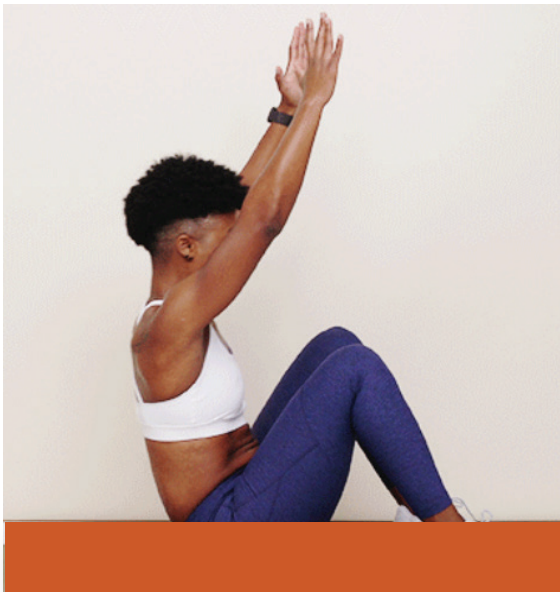
## Featured Exercise ► Sit-Up to Overhead Reach

### HOW TO DO IT:

- Lie faceup with your arms by your sides, knees bent, and feet flat on the floor.
- Contract your core so that your low back gently presses against the floor. This is your starting position.
- From here, do a sit-up by contracting your core, exhaling as you roll up, and coming all the way with your arms reaching overhead to a seated position while your feet remain stationary.
- Slowly reverse the motion to return to the starting position.
- This is 1 rep. Continue performing reps for 40 seconds.

### THE BENEFITS:

This dynamic core move works your abs as well as your back and shoulders. As you perform reps, make sure your hips stay aligned and that you don't round your back.



Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



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