



## Exercise and Diabetes

Exercise delays the onset of Type 2 diabetes, and improves diabetes control. Whether you have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, or if you are at risk for diabetes, get moving!

### **Physical activity:**

- **Raises your heart rate.** Whether by walking, jogging, bicycling or swimming, being active gets your heart pumping, which helps your body use insulin more effectively.
- **Improves blood circulation.** Exercise also gets the blood to all organs, especially the kidneys, brain, heart and eyes, which can be injured by poor diabetes management.
- **Decreases risk of heart disease.** Plus, by reducing LDL cholesterol and blood pressure, regular activity reduces your risk of heart disease.
- **Reduces stress.** Stress can increase your risk for developing diabetes. And, for people with diabetes, stress makes it harder to manage the condition.
- **Lowers blood sugar and A1c.** Exercising when you have diabetes lowers blood sugar and reduces A1c. It also improves protein and fat metabolism, slowing organ damage.

### **Check in with Your Doctor**

Before beginning a program of physical activity of more than brisk walking, you should be assessed by your doctor. If you are taking insulin, you need to keep a close eye on your carbohydrate intake and how you feel. If your medicine dose is not adjusted properly, you may be at risk for hypoglycemia.

Whether starting your first exercise program or training for an endurance event — such as a marathon or triathlon — increase your training slowly, check your blood sugars, and fuel and hydrate before, during and after exercising. Your goal is to be in the blood glucose range that your health care provider recommends. As your fitness improves, you will reap greater health benefits.

### **Pick an Activity You Enjoy**

Did you know that dancing and gardening count as physical activity? Cleaning counts towards your activity minutes, too. Some examples of moderate physical activity are walking (including at the grocery store and mall), stationary bicycling, swimming, badminton, mowing the lawn and mopping or scrubbing the floor.

Also, you don't need to get all of your physical activity done at one time — spread it throughout the day and week. Start slowly and build from where you are, then mix it up. Remember, you don't have to do it all at once; start with as little as 5 minutes and then build up gradually. Try different activities to keep you going and keep you interested.

### **Fuel Smart for Activity**

Adding more movement to your day may require some changes to how you eat. If you have diabetes, activity can lower your blood sugars and your health care provider may adjust your diabetes medicine. Stay hydrated during your activity with water. A registered dietitian or a diabetes educator nutritionist can help you adjust your meal plan so you have the fuel your body needs.

*Source: article adapted from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; <https://www.eatright.org/health/diseases-and-conditions/diabetes/exercise-and-diabetes>*

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