



Diabetes and Exercise

What can physical activity do for me?

Physical activity has many positive effects, which include:

- Lowering your risk for pre-diabetes, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke
- Helping keep your blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure, HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides on target
- Relieving stress
- Strengthening your heart, muscles and bones
- Keeping your body and your joints flexible.

Even if you have never exercised before, you can find ways to add physical activity to your day. You will get benefits even if your activities are not strenuous. Once physical activity is part of your routine, you will wonder how you did without it.

If I haven't been very active lately, what should I do first?

If you have health problems, start with a check-up from your health care provider. Your provider can recommend physical activities that will help you but will not make your conditions worse.

What kinds of physical activity are best?

A complete physical activity routine includes four kinds of activities, which are:

1. **Being active throughout the day**, such as walking, using the stairs, and moving around
2. **Aerobic exercise**, such as brisk walking, swimming or dancing
3. **Strength training**, such as lifting light weights
4. **Flexibility exercises**, such as stretching.

Being active throughout the day

Being active helps burn calories. Place a check mark next to the things you would like to try.

- Walk instead of driving whenever possible.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk around while you talk on the phone.
- Work in the garden, rake leaves, or wash the car.
- Play with the kids.
- Carry things upstairs in two trips instead of one.
- Park at the far end of the shopping center lot or grocery store lot.
- Other things I can do:

Aerobic exercise

Aim for at least 30 minutes a day at least five days a week. If you have not been very active recently, start

out with 5 or 10 minutes a day. Then work up to more time each week. Or split your activity for the day—try a brisk 10-minute walk 3 times a day. If you are trying to lose weight, you may want to aim for more than 30 minutes a day. Here are some ways to get aerobic exercise:

- Take a brisk walk every day.
- Go dancing or take a dance aerobics class.
- Swim or do water aerobics.
- Take a bicycle ride outdoors or use a stationary bicycle indoors.

Your aerobic exercise plan:

What I will do:

What I need to get ready:

Which days and times:

How long each session will be:

How I will warm up and cool down for each session:

Strength training

Strength training helps build strong bones and muscles and makes everyday chores like carrying groceries easier. With more muscle, you burn more calories, even at rest. Do your strength routine several times a week. Here are some ways to do strength training:

- Lift light weights at home.
- Join a class that uses weights, elastic bands, or plastic tubes.
- If you travel, make time to use the hotel fitness center, or take lightweight, easy-to-pack resistance bands with you.

Your strength training plan:

What I will do:

What I need to get ready:

Which days and times:

How long each session will be:

Flexibility exercises

Flexibility exercises, also called stretching, help keep your joints limber and lower your chances of getting hurt. Gentle stretching for 5 to 10 minutes before and after exercising helps your body warm up and get ready for activities and cool down afterwards.

Keeping a record of your progress

Keep track of your activity. You might find that writing everything down helps keep you on target. Think about what works best for you. You might try a notebook, calendar, spreadsheet, cell phone, or online activity tracker to log and keep a record of your progress.

How a support system can help

It might be helpful to meet on a regular basis with others who are also trying to be active. Think about joining an exercise group for general support. Or find a walking buddy. Then work together to reach your goals.

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