

BEING ACTIVE

Benefits of Being Active

Activity is an important part of diabetes management. Being active can help you maintain a healthy weight and keep your blood sugar in range.

Activity improves diabetes control by:

- Aiding in weight loss
- Helping your insulin work better
- Lowering blood sugar levels

Other benefits of activity may include:

- Managing stress and depression
- Lowering your risk of heart disease
- Raising good cholesterol levels
- Lowering bad cholesterol and triglycerides
- Lowering blood pressure
- Building strong and healthy bones
- Decreasing body fat
- Increasing muscle

Types of Physical Activity

There are different types of exercise: aerobic, resistance and flexibility training. All types of activity are good for you. It is important to find an activity that is best for you and that you enjoy.

Aerobic Activity:
Gets your heart rate up!

- Bike riding
- Walking
- Swimming
- Running
- Yardwork
- Dancing
- Skiing

Resistance Training:
Builds strength!

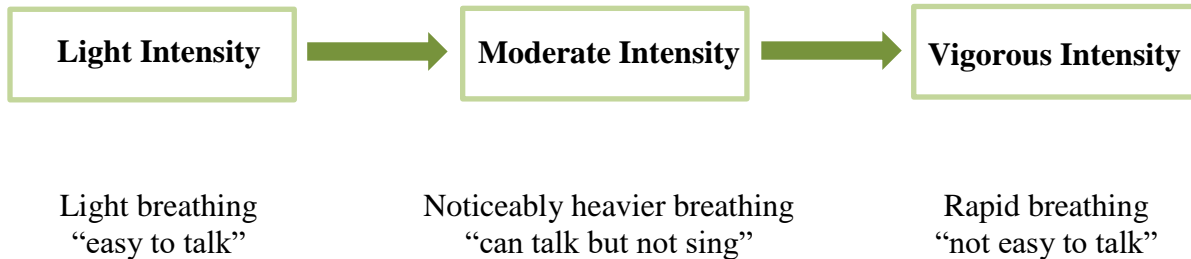
- Push-ups
- Crunches or sit-ups
- Squats
- Lunges
- Lifting weights
- Resistance (stretch) bands

Flexibility Training:
Helps keep you moving!

- Yoga
- Stretching
- Pilates
- Tai Chi

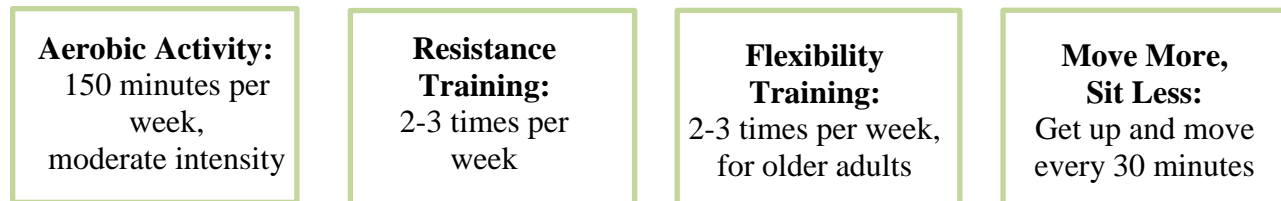
Levels of Physical Activity

The level of intensity from the same exercise will be different for everyone. For example, going for a brisk 30 minute walk may be light intensity for some and vigorous intensity for others. An easy way to know how intense you are exercising is to do the “talk test”. Try talking while you exercise and use the chart below to determine your level of intensity.



Guidelines

While any physical activity is good, adults with diabetes should aim for the following:



Getting Started

There are several things you should think about before beginning a new exercise routine.

Talk with Your Provider

- People with diabetes may also have other health concerns.
- Check with your provider to see if exercise is the right thing for you.

Identify Barriers

- Ask yourself, “What makes it hard for me to exercise?”
- Then ask yourself, “Is there anything that can be done about this?”

Start Slowly

- Remember, doing some physical activity, even a small amount, is better than nothing.
- Start with 5-10 minutes a few times a week and gradually add more.
- Be as active as you can.

Effects of Exercise on Blood Sugar

Exercise usually lowers blood sugar levels. The effects of exercise on blood sugar can last up to 12 to 24 hours after the activity. Check your blood sugar before, during and after exercise to learn how your blood sugar responds to physical activity.

Exercise Precautions

People with diabetes should take certain precautions when engaging in physical activity.

Prevent and Treat Low Blood Sugar

- Wear medical identification that lets others know you have diabetes in an emergency.
- Carry a sugar source such as glucose tablets, glucose gel or juice in case your blood sugar drops.
- You may need to eat a snack before exercise.
- If you take insulin, avoid injecting insulin into an area of the body you will be directly moving.

Avoid Vigorous Exercise When Blood Sugar is High

- At a certain blood sugar level, vigorous exercise can be unsafe and may increase blood sugar.
 - If you have **type 1** diabetes and your blood sugar is over **240 mg/dL** avoid vigorous aerobic activity.
 - If you have **type 2** diabetes and your blood sugar is over **300 mg/dL** avoid vigorous aerobic activity.
- Try to figure out why your blood sugar is high.
- Make sure your blood sugar is back in your target range before doing any vigorous activity.

Take Care of Your Feet

- Wear the appropriate shoes and socks.
- Check your feet for blisters or sores before and after exercise.
- Exercise on a smooth surface.
- If you have neuropathy in your feet, avoid high impact activities like running and jumping.
- Try low impact activities such as swimming, riding a stationary bike or chair exercises.

If You Have Retinopathy

- Avoid strenuous activities and high impact aerobic activity.
- Try activities such as swimming, walking, stationary bike or chair exercises.

Stay Hydrated

- Drink water before, during and after exercise.
- Do NOT exercise in very hot, humid weather or in smog.

Warm Up and Cool Down

- Warm up for 5-10 minutes before exercise to reduce your chance of injury.
- Cool down for 5-10 minutes after exercise to return your heart rate back to normal.
- Try stretching or slow walking as a warm up or cool down activity.