



IT'S A GREAT TIME TO GET MOVING

Getting in shape shouldn't feel like a chore. Find activities you love and you'll feel better before you know it.

START SLOW, MOVE STEADY

If it's been awhile since you really got moving, that's OK. The key is to start out slowly. Light activities like walking are usually a safe bet, but you can always ask your doctor what might be best for you. Learn how to move safely, and then stick with it.

GET STARTED SAFELY



It doesn't matter whether you've been active in the past or not – you can still start now. But, if you have never been active or have not been active for a while, it is important to start slowly. Light activities like walking are fine for most people with diabetes. If you haven't been active and feel unsure about your health, talk to your healthcare provider before doing anything more demanding. If you have any diabetes complications, there may be certain exercises you should avoid.

BLOOD SUGAR AND EXERCISE

The impact of physical activity on your blood glucose will vary depending on how long you are active and many other factors. Here are a few ways that exercise lowers blood sugar:

Insulin sensitivity is increased, so your muscle cells are better able to use any available insulin to take up glucose during and after activity. When your muscles contract during activity, your cells are able to take up glucose and use it for energy whether insulin is available or not.

This is how exercise can help lower blood sugar in the short term. And when you are active on a regular basis, it can also lower your A1C.



EXERCISING WITH DIABETES COMPLICATIONS

Learn more about exercising safely with specific diabetes complications.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR BLOOD SUGAR AND EXERCISE



The effect physical activity has on your blood sugar will vary depending on how long you are active and many other factors. Physical activity can lower your blood sugar up to 24 hours or more after your workout by making your body more sensitive to insulin. Become familiar with how your blood sugar responds to exercise. Checking your blood sugar level more often before and after exercise can help you see the benefits of activity. You also can use the results of your blood sugar checks to see how your body reacts to different activities. Understanding these patterns can help you prevent your blood sugar from going too high or too low.

HYPOLYCEMIA AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

People taking insulin or insulin secretagogues (oral diabetes pills that cause your pancreas to make more insulin) are at risk for hypoglycemia if insulin dose or carbohydrate intake is not adjusted with exercise. Checking your blood sugar before doing any physical activity is important to prevent hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Talk to your diabetes care team (doctor, nurse, dietitian or pharmacist) to find out if you are at risk for hypoglycemia.

If you experience hypoglycemia during or after exercise, treat it immediately:



FOLLOW THE 15-15 RULE:

1 Check your blood sugar	2 If your reading is 100 mg/dl or lower, have 15-20 grams of carbohydrate to raise your blood sugar. This may be: 4 Glucose tablets (4 grams per tablet), or 1 Glucose gel tube (15 grams per gel tube), or 4 Ounces (1/2 cup) of juice or regular soda (not diet), or 1 Tablespoon of sugar or honey	3 Check your blood sugar again after 15 minutes. If it is still below 100 mg/dl, have another serving of 15 grams of carbohydrate	4 Repeat these steps every 15 minutes until your blood sugar is at least 100 mg/dl
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If you want to continue your workout, you will usually need to take a break to treat your low blood sugar. Check to make sure your blood sugar has come back up above 100 mg/dl before starting to exercise again.

Keep in mind that low blood sugar can occur during or long after physical activity. It is more likely to occur if you:

- Take insulin or an insulin secretagogue
- Exercise for a long time
- Skip meals
- Exercise strenuously

If hypoglycemia interferes with your exercise routine, talk to your healthcare provider about the best treatment plan for you. Your provider may suggest eating a small snack before you exercise or they may make an adjustment to your medication(s). For people engaging in long duration exercise, a combination of these two regimen changes may be necessary to prevent hypoglycemia during and after exercise.

FIND THE TYPE 1 BALANCE

If you're living with type 1, you probably know that extra considerations are needed when you exercise. Because you have to balance insulin doses with the food you eat and your activity level, it's important to plan ahead and know your body's typical response to exercise.

INJURY-FREE EXERCISE:

11 quick safety tips

Increasing your activity level is great for your diabetes and for your overall health, but it should be an enjoyable and safe experience. Here are a few simple things you can do to help prevent injuries, dehydration, and hypoglycemia when exercising:

If you have never been active or haven't been active for a while, start slowly. If you feel unsure about your health, talk to your health care team about which activities are safest for you.

Your health care provider's advice will depend on the condition of your heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, feet, and nervous system. Still, many people with diabetes can do the same activities as someone without diabetes. Warm up for 5 minutes before starting to exercise and cool down for 5 minutes after. Your warm up or cool down should be a lower intensity than the rest of your time exercising. This helps get your blood flowing and warms up your joints.

Avoid doing activity in extremely hot or cold temperatures. Choose indoor options when the weather is extreme. Drink plenty of water before, during, and after activity to stay hydrated.

If you feel a low coming on, be ready to test for it and treat it. Always carry a source of carbohydrate with you so you'll be ready to treat low blood sugar. This is especially important if you are on insulin and have type 1 diabetes.

If exercising for an extended period (more than an hour or two), you may want to have a sports drink that provides carbohydrates. Be careful to check the nutrition facts though, you may need to water down the drink so that you don't have too much, which can cause your blood sugar to spike.

Wear a medical identification bracelet, necklace, or a medical ID tag that identifies you as someone with diabetes in case of emergency, and carry a cell phone with you in case you need to call someone for assistance.



ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE ENERGIZING BUT NOT OVERLY DIFFICULT



Use the "talk test" to make sure you are not pushing yourself too hard. If you become short of breath and you can't talk, then slow down. This is most important when you are just starting to increase the activity in your routine. As you become fit, you'll be able to exercise at a higher intensity and chat with others while you do it.

Take care of your feet by wearing shoes and clean socks that fit you well.

You should also check inside your shoes before wearing them. Shoes with silica gel or air mid-soles are a good choice for weight-bearing activities like walking because they are built to reduce stress on your feet and joints. Socks that are made out of a material that reduces friction and pulls moisture away from your skin can also help protect your feet. Some examples are CoolMax, polypropylene, or acrylic (stay away from cotton).

Carefully inspect your feet before and after activity for blisters, redness, or other signs of irritation. Talk to your doctor if you have a foot injury or a non-healing blister, cut, or sore.

Stop doing an activity if you feel any pain, shortness of breath, or light-headedness. Talk to your doctor about any unusual symptoms that you experience.

There are a few simple things you can do to help prevent injuries, dehydration, and hypoglycemia when exercising.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Your healthcare provider should support you in your efforts to become more active.