

It's your move: Exercising, eating, and staying positive

Whether you have type 2 diabetes or want to avoid developing it, it's your move!

A minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking, can help you manage your diabetes. Getting at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise each day, at least five days a week, is an excellent plan. You don't need to do all 30 minutes of exercise at one time. Spread it out! Try three 10-minute blocks of exercise over the course of the day, it may be as good for you as one 30-minute session.¹

Try to incorporate four types of physical activity into your weekly routine: aerobic (cardio), strength training, stretching, and balance (the latter two are especially important as you get older). Lay out your plan for the week in advance (using the chart on the next page as a guide).

We suggest putting your physical activity into your calendar like other important appointments—because nothing is more important (for yourself and those who depend on you) than maintaining your health.

Here are just some of the benefits of regular physical activity:

- Improves insulin sensitivity (enables cells to use insulin more effectively)²
- May prevent type 2 diabetes if you are diagnosed with prediabetes or are at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes²
- Improves blood glucose control if you have type 2 diabetes²
- Improves cardiovascular fitness²
- Reduces risk for developing heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis and certain types of cancer²
- Lowers blood pressure and triglycerides, and increases HDL ("good") cholesterol²
- Can contribute to weight loss and can help you keep weight off long term²
- Helps maintain muscle and slow the loss of bone density²
- Helps improve your mood, reduce anxiety, and help you sleep better²

Here are best exercises for people with diabetes to consider:⁵

1. **Walking:** You don't need a gym membership or expensive exercise equipment to get moving.
2. **Cycling:** This low impact exercise can help you meet your fitness goals while minimizing impact on your joints.
3. **Swimming:** Aquatic exercise can help lower blood sugar levels, much like land-based exercise does.
4. **Team sports:** An opportunity to socialize and stay on course with your physical activity.
5. **Aerobic dance:** Zumba, anyone?
6. **Weightlifting:** Strength training may also help improve your blood sugar control, reports the ADA.
7. **Resistance band exercises:** Helps strengthen your muscles.
8. **Calisthenics:** Common exercises include push-ups, pull-ups, squats, lunges, and more!
9. **Pilates:** Designed to improve core strength, coordination and balance.
10. **Yoga:** Can help people with type 2 diabetes manage their blood sugar, cholesterol levels, and weight. It may also help lower your blood pressure, improve the quality of your sleep, and boost your mood.

Remember to:¹

- Work up slowly if you're starting a new activity or increasing the level of your activity.
- Warm up and cool down before doing cardio and strength training.
- Review your exercise plans with your healthcare provider, especially if you have any other medical conditions, diabetes complications, or are on medication for diabetes.

Contrary to what you think (or what you may have observed in older relatives living with diabetes), we now know that having diabetes doesn't mean that you'll never eat sweets again or have a glass of wine. People with diabetes don't need to eat special "diabetic" food. You just need to make better choices about the foods you may be eating now.³

A healthier diet and regular physical activity should help improve your mood, sense of well-being and confidence. But it isn't unusual to feel stressed or worried if you have diabetes. In fact, researchers report that anxiety affects about 40 percent of people with diabetes.⁴ Also, people with diabetes are two to three times more likely to have depression than people without diabetes.⁶

Your emotions are every bit as important as food, exercise and medication. If you feel unhappy, angry, easily frustrated, impatient, unable to participate or care about things you used to enjoy—talk to your healthcare provider. Help is available!⁶

1. <https://www.diabetes.org/healthy-living/fitness/weekly-exercise-targets>, accessed on March 22, 2021

2. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm>, accessed on March 22, 2021

3. American Diabetes Association, "Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes - 2020," Diabetes Care, January 2020

4. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/327321#diagnosis>, accessed on March 22, 2021

5. <https://www.healthline.com/health/type-2-diabetes/top-exercises>, accessed on March 22, 2021

6. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/mental-health.html>, accessed on March 22, 2021

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