

# Being Active When You Have Type 2 Diabetes

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Do you want to feel better, move better and sleep better? Experts now say that any physical activity counts toward better health – even just a few minutes! Being active is a great way to improve the way your body uses insulin and burn more calories to control your weight. Just one session of aerobic activity improves blood glucose (blood sugar) and insulin action up to 24 hours or longer!

## Getting Started

### Keep It Simple

Just sit less and move around more! Walk to the mailbox. Walk the dog. Dance in the kitchen. Take the stairs. Find opportunities to move throughout your day. It all adds up.



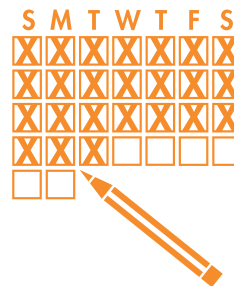
### Talk with Your Doctor

Talk to your health care provider before you start a new exercise program. Ask if you are on a diabetes drug that can cause low blood glucose or makes it hard to lose weight. Are there any exercises you should avoid?



### Build a Plan

Ask to meet with a certified diabetes educator (CDE) or members of the health care team who can go over your diet, exercise and diabetes care plan.



### Blood Glucose

Learn when you should check your blood glucose and what to do if the numbers are too low or too high. Know the signs of low blood glucose and what to do if it happens.



## Diabetes Tips and Cautions

Keep a log of your exercise, blood glucose, meals and medications. This will help you learn how to keep your blood glucose in target.

Many types of diabetes drugs don't usually cause low blood glucose, so you may not need extra snacks before or after activity.

Some diabetes drugs, like insulin and sulfonylureas, are more likely to cause low blood glucose. If you take these, tell your health care provider about any low blood glucose episodes. They can help you make changes to stay safe.

If you suspect low blood glucose (or experience shaking, abnormal sweating, loss of coordination) check it right away. If low, take 15 grams of carbohydrate. Carry glucose tablets, a sugary beverage or hard candy with you just in case.

Diabetes can cause damage to the nerves, eyes, kidney and heart. Your exercise plan may need to be adjusted. Everyone with diabetes should practice good foot and skin care, get dilated eye exams, and see the doctor regularly.

# Aerobic Activity



Aerobic activity increases your heart rate and breathing. Build up to doing at least 150 minutes/week of moderate-intensity activity (like a brisk walk, light cycling or water exercise) to vigorous activity (like jogging, singles tennis or hiking hills). You'll improve the way your body stores and uses glucose, as well as your stamina and heart health.

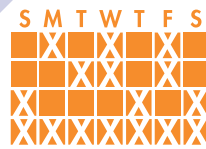
## What?

Any rhythmic, continuous activity



## How often?

3-7 Days/week



## How hard?

Fairly light to somewhat hard



## How much?

Start w/ a few minutes. Gradually build up to 30-60 minutes over the day.



**Remember:** Fit in 5 or 10 minutes here and there. Or go for 20-30 minutes. Be active however and wherever you can. To lose weight, do twice as much activity.

## Aerobic Activity Cautions

To stay safe and injury free:

- Start with light to medium effort.
- Gradually increase your pace and time spent being active. Start low and go slow!
- Warm up and cool down at an easy pace before and after exercise.

# Strength Training



Strength training is important for people with diabetes because it builds muscle. Muscle tissue plays a big role in managing blood glucose, and you don't have to be a body-builder! Plus, strength training can make daily activities like lifting laundry baskets or yardwork easier and safer.

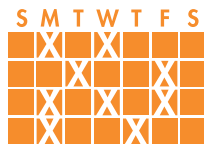
## What?

Hand weights, resistance bands, weight machines, or your own body (for example, kitchen counter push-ups or chair squats)



## How often?

2-3 Days/week  
\*Rest day in between!



## How hard?

Start with light effort. Build up to medium or hard effort.



## How much?

10-15 repetitions to start (for each major muscle group) Build up to 8-10 reps of challenging effort.



**Remember:** If you need it, get help from a certified exercise professional. They can teach you the right way to do exercises and how to breathe properly.

## Strength Training Cautions

- Slowly increase how much you lift and how often.
- Avoid straining or holding your breath when lifting. This causes your blood pressure to go up.
- If you have severe diabetic retinopathy, don't lift heavy weights.

# Other Types of Physical Activity



Aerobic activity and strength training are at the heart of a program for those with type 2 diabetes. But you may enjoy and benefit from these other options.

### Yoga, Pilates and Tai Chi

All help with balance, strength and relaxation and can lower your blood glucose



### Take more steps

Use a smart phone or an activity tracker to measure your progress and stay motivated. Count your steps daily for the first week. Slowly build up to 7,000-9,000 steps/day.



### Flexibility

Stretch your muscles 2-3 days/week to the point of feeling tightness. Hold for 10-30 seconds (30-60 seconds for older adults). For example, stretch your calves or the back of your thighs.



### Balance

Exercises may include standing on one foot, walking on a line, or using a balance board. Train in an uncluttered area and use a chair or wall for support if needed.



### More Help

- For more information, consider reading the book *Diabetes & Keeping Fit For Dummies* by Sheri Colberg, Ph.D., with the American Diabetes Association.
- American Diabetes Association: [diabetes.org](https://www.diabetes.org)

Go to [www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/find-a-pro](https://www.acsm.org/get-stay-certified/find-a-pro) to find an ACSM certified exercise professional near you.

Start where you are. Use what you have. **Do what you can.**

How will I get started **this week?** \_\_\_\_\_

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