

# It's your move: Exercise, eating and staying positive

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

Get at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise each day, at least five days a week. You don't need to do all 30 minutes of exercise at one time. Three 10-minute blocks of exercise over the course of the day are as good for you as one 30-minute session.

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 below 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)
- May prevent type 2 diabetes if you are diagnosed with prediabetes or are at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes
- Improves blood glucose control if you have type 2 diabetes
- Improves cardiovascular fitness
- Reduces risk for developing heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis and certain types of cancer
- Lowers blood pressure and triglycerides, and increases HDL ("good") cholesterol
- Can contribute to weight loss and can help you keep weight off long term
- Helps maintain muscle as you shed fat
- Helps improve your mood and general sense of well-being
- Contributes to sleeping better and having more energy

## The following is a sample activity chart, that we adapted to give you some ideas for how to incorporate physical activity into your week.<sup>1</sup>

### Remember to:

- 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



### Aerobic/cardio

#### Every day during the work week I will:

- Take the stairs at work
- Park at the far end of the parking lot
- Ask a co-worker to take a brisk 15-30 minute walk with me at lunchtime
- Take a 10-minute walk (or ride my bike) after dinner

#### On the weekends, I will plan at least one activity with family or friends:

- Tennis, swimming, bicycling, hiking
- Walking around a mall or museum (great backup for bad weather days)

#### If I need more moderate exercises, I'll try:

- Swimming
- Using a stationary bike



### Strength/resistance

#### Twice during the week, I'll do one of these:

- Lift free weights
- Use resistance bands
- Climb stairs
- Calisthenics (pushups, pull ups, sit ups)
- Gardening (weeding, digging)
- Yoga, Tai Chi



### Flexibility/stretching

#### Every day, I'll do this:

- Basic stretches
- Yoga or pilates



### Balance

#### Three or more times a week, I'll

- Walk backwards or sideways (safely!)
- Walk heel to toe in a straight line
- Alternate standing on one foot (hold the pose) and then the other

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. Diabetics don't need to eat special "diabetic" food. You just need to make better choices about the foods you may be eating now.

A healthier diet and regular physical activity should help improve your mood, sense of wellbeing and confidence. But it isn't unusual to feel stressed or worried if you have diabetes. In fact, one out of three people with diabetes feel very stressed, anxious, or depressed. Stress can make it harder to keep your blood glucose levels on track.

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—share your feelings with people you trust. Talk to supportive members of your family, close friends or your healthcare provider.

1. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease, "Be Active When You Have Diabetes," August 2012

2. American Diabetes Association, "Diabetes Advisor: Understanding Emotions and Stress with Diabetes," November, 2009

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