

Exercise and diabetes:

get moving in a healthier direction

What kind of exercise should I do?

Check with your healthcare provider before beginning any exercise program. Most people should regularly include these 2 types of exercise:

Aerobic exercise — uses movement over time (such as walking, swimming, and rowing) to make your heart beat faster. Aerobic exercise can make your heart stronger if you do it often enough and long enough.

Strength training — uses weight (including the body's weight) or resistance to build strength. You may use items such as free weights, weight machines, or resistance bands. Strength training can help your body burn more calories, even when you are at rest.

Why is exercise so important?

One of the best changes you can make to help control your diabetes is to add exercise to your day. Here's why:

- **Exercise can help you lose weight and keep it off** — better than diet alone.
- **Exercise can help you lower your blood sugar** — even if you don't need to lose weight.
- **Exercise can help you avoid other health problems.** With diabetes, you are more likely to have a heart attack or a stroke. Exercise can help reduce your risk.
- **Exercise can reduce stress and give you more energy.**

How much exercise do I need?

You should try to exercise most days of the week. Ask your healthcare provider how high your heart rate should go (your target heart rate) and for how long. This will help you get the most benefit from exercise.

If you are not active or are new to exercise, start slowly. You may want to start with a 10-minute walk each day. Slowly, you can work up to 30 to 50 minutes, 3 or more days a week.

At least 3 days a week, you should also include some strength training. Your healthcare provider can let you know which exercises will be best for you.

Target Heart Rate

Work with your healthcare provider to complete.

My target heart rate is

for

minutes.



How do I get started?

Check with your healthcare provider first! It is important to discuss exercise with your healthcare provider before you begin. Together, you can develop a plan you can live with. You will achieve the most “gain” with the least “pain” if you follow this simple advice:

- **Go slowly!** Before each session, take 5 minutes to stretch and start moving slowly. This gives your body a chance to warm up. At the end of your workout, take another 5 minutes to cool down with a slower pace and stretch again.
- **Listen to your body.** Feeling a little stiff or sore is normal at first. But if you hurt a joint or pull a muscle, stop for a few days or until your healthcare provider tells you it is OK to start again.
- **Watch for warning signals.** These include:
 - Sudden dizziness
 - Cold sweat
 - Paleness
 - Feeling faint
 - Pain or pressure in your upper body, neck, or arms just after exercising

If you notice any of these signs, stop exercising. Call your healthcare provider right away.

I have tried exercising before and gave up. How can I stick with my program?

Here are some tips:

Make exercise part of your routine.

- Place it on your calendar.
- Try to walk whenever you can rather than driving or taking a bus or train.
- Use the stairs instead of an elevator or escalator.
- Do household chores, such as vacuuming, lawn mowing, and gardening, to increase your activity level.
- Use an exercise record to track your goals and progress.

Make exercise fun!

- Choose an activity that you enjoy.
- Find a friend who likes the same activity.
- Do a variety of exercises and activities so you do not get bored.
- Set reasonable goals. You'll feel better about what you're doing if you set goals that are challenging but realistic.



Check with your doctor first!

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