

Exercise to Manage Your Blood Glucose

Being physically active every day can help you manage your blood glucose. That's because an active lifestyle can improve your body's ability to use insulin. Daily activity can also help delay or prevent complications of diabetes. It can help you maintain a healthy weight. And it's a great way to relieve stress. If you aren't normally active, be sure to consult your healthcare provider before getting started.

How Much Activity Do You Need?

If daily activity is new to you, start slow and steady. Begin with _____ minutes of activity each day. Then work up to at least _____ minutes a day. Do this by adding a few minutes each week. It doesn't have to be done all at once. Each active period throughout the day adds up.

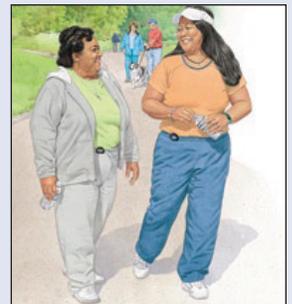
Just Move!

You don't have to join a gym or own pricey sports equipment. Just get out and walk. Walking is an aerobic exercise that makes your heart and lungs work hard. It helps your heart and blood vessels. Walking requires only a sturdy pair of sneakers and your own two feet. The more you walk, the easier it gets.

- Schedule time every day to move your feet.
- Make it part of your daily routine
- Walk with a friend or a group to keep it interesting and fun.
- Try taking several short walks during the day to meet your daily activity goal.

A Pedometer Makes Every Step Count

A pedometer is a small device that keeps track of how many steps you take. You can clip it to your belt (or a strap on your arm or leg) and go about your daily routine. At the end of the day, the pedometer shows the total number of steps you took. Use a pedometer to set daily goals for yourself. For instance, if you walk 4,000 steps a day, try adding 200 more steps each day. Aim for a goal of 7,500. With every step, you're doing a little more to help your body use insulin.



Adding Resistance Exercise

Resistance exercise (also called strength training) makes muscles stronger. It also helps muscles use insulin better. Ask your healthcare provider whether this type of exercise is right for you. If it is, your healthcare provider can help you work it in to your activity plan.

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Staying Safe

Being active may cause blood glucose to drop faster than usual. This is especially true if you take medication to manage your blood glucose. But there are things you can do to help reduce the risk of accidental lows. Keep these tips in mind:

- Always carry identification when you exercise outside your home. Carry a cell phone to use in case of emergency.
- If you can, include friends and family in your activities.
- Wear a medical ID bracelet that says you have diabetes.
- Use the right safety equipment for the activity you do (such as a bicycle helmet when you ride a bicycle outdoors). Wear closed-toed shoes that fit your feet well.
- Drink plenty of water before and during activity.
- Keep a fast-acting sugar (such as glucose tablets) on hand in case of low blood glucose.
- Dress properly for the weather. Wear a hat if it's sunny, or wait until evening if it's too hot.
- Avoid being active for long periods in very hot or very cold weather.
- Skip activity if you're sick.

Notice How Activity Affects Blood Glucose

Physical activity is important when you have diabetes. But you need to keep an eye on your blood glucose level. Check often if you have been active for longer than usual, or if the activity was unplanned. Make it a habit to check your blood glucose before being active. And check again a few hours later. Use your log book to write down how activity affects your numbers. If you take insulin, you may be able to adjust your dose before a planned activity. This can help prevent lows. Talk to your healthcare provider to learn more.