



# Physical Activity

Physical activity is good for everyone, but especially for people with diabetes. It is an important part of your diabetes management along with a healthy eating plan. Technology has made our life easier saving us effort and time but the downside is that many people don't move enough.

## Benefits of Exercise for people with diabetes:

- lower blood glucose levels
- improve blood cholesterol
- manage stress
- control blood pressure

## What sort of physical activity and how often?

Check with your doctor or an exercise physiologist about which physical activity is right for you. Increasing your physical activity by **any** amount will be of benefit.

For maximum benefit it is recommended that you exercise at moderate intensity for 30-45 minutes most days of the week (e.g. brisk walking). If you are unable to do this, then start with three lots of 10 minutes each day.

This activity combined with resistance training (using weights), offers definite benefits in blood glucose management. Resistance training is recommended 2-3 times per week, not on consecutive days. It is important to allow the muscles to recover.

## Planning your exercise programme

Consider the following to make physical activity fun, safe and rewarding:

- Wear good quality footwear
- Remember the sunscreen and hat, protect yourself against the sun
- Drink water regularly, carry a water bottle
- Do physical activity at regular times and on set days
- Set short term goals and build towards your ultimate goal
- Enjoy physical activity with a friend or family
- Look for ways to include physical activity as part of your regular routine.
- Use the stairs instead of the lift, walk to the bus stop or get off the bus one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way

## Barriers identified that may prevent physical activity:

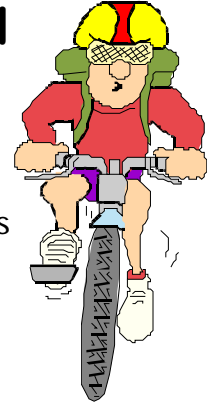
too old                      too sick                      too weak  
too hot/cold                too fat                        too tired



Ways to overcome these barriers can be discussed with your diabetes team. Remember that the long-term benefits of exercise do outweigh the temporary excuses not to exercise. Be positive and plan carefully.

# Monitoring your blood glucose during physical activity

It is important to monitor your blood glucose levels during physical activity particularly when starting a new programme or increasing the intensity. This allows you to understand how your blood glucose levels respond.



## Points to remember when doing physical activity

- Warm ups and cool downs prepare your body and help to prevent injury. Include stretches and gradually increase your effort
- Do not exercise when unwell
- Check with your doctor or exercise physiologist before starting a physical exercise programme
- Physical activity can lower blood glucose levels for up to 48 hours. However, before this decrease you can expect an initial rise in blood glucose levels in the first hour after exercise. This rise varies between individuals

## For people on certain tablets and/or insulin:

- Many of the early signs of a low blood glucose (sweating, feeling faint and weakness) are a common response
- Everybody reacts differently
- It may be necessary to adjust your eating plan, tablets or insulin
- You should always carry quickly absorbed glucose such as jelly beans or glucose tablets if you are on medication or insulin therapy in case your blood glucose drops too low.
- The effects of exercise can last for up to 48-72 hours after your last activity. Watch for hypoglycaemia during this period. Check with your GP, diabetes educator or pharmacist to see if your medication puts you at risk.

## Example programme for beginners

The key is to set short term achievable goals and build your fitness gradually.

<u>Week one</u>	walk twice a day for 10 minutes
<u>Week two</u>	walk twice a day for 15 minutes
<u>Week three</u>	walk twice a day for 20 minutes
<u>Week four</u>	walk once a day for 30 minutes
<u>Week five</u>	walk once a day for 45 minutes.

Some activities you may like to try:

- **Swimming / Aqua Aerobics**
- **Dancing**
- **Cycling**
- **Strength Training**
- **Golf**
- **Gardening**
- **Bowls**

