

Being More Active Is Better for You

If you have diabetes, being active makes your body more sensitive to insulin (the hormone that allows cells in your body to use blood sugar for energy), which helps manage your diabetes. Physical activity also helps control blood sugar levels and lowers your risk of heart disease and nerve damage.

Some additional benefits:

- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Losing weight, if needed
- Feeling happier
- Sleeping better
- Improving your memory
- Controlling your blood pressure
- Lowering LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and raising HDL (“good”) cholesterol

How To Benefit From Physical Activity

The goal is to get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity. One way to do this is to fit in at least 20 to 25 minutes of activity every day. Also, on 2 or more days a week, include activities that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms)

Examples of moderate-intensity physical activities include:

- Walking briskly
- Doing housework
- Mowing the lawn
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Bicycling
- Playing Sports

These activities work your large muscles, increase your heart rate, and make you breathe harder; important goals for fitness.



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Access to Care

Diabetes Newsletter

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Being Physically Active to Prevent Diabetes

- **How to Benefit from Physical Activity**
- **Special Considerations for People with Diabetes**

COVID-19/Coronavirus is most risky for people with diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions.

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, diarrhea, and difficulty breathing.

If you have these symptoms, call your ATC physician.

For COVID-19 information and resources, go to:
www.accesstocare.org/resources

Our goal always is to help our members stay as healthy as possible for a happy and productive life! To help achieve healthy living, this newsletter for members focuses on diabetes education, prevention and management. Let us know what you'd like us to cover in the future.

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Ways To Get Started: Finding an activity you enjoy and having a partner helps you stick with it.

- **Find something you like.** Doing something you enjoy is important because if you don't like it, you won't stick with it. Find an activity that you and your doctor agree you can do regularly.
- **Start small.** Begin slowly and work your way up to the desired level. (e.g., park farther from the door, take the stairs, do yard work, or walk the dog) Start small & gradually add a little more time & intensity each week.
- **Find a partner.** Having a partner may help you continue to be active when someone else is counting on you.
- **Pick a goal.** An example: to walk a mile every day for a month or to be active every weekday for 30 minutes. Be specific and realistic. **Always discuss your activity goals with your health care provider.**
- **Schedule it in.** The more regular activity you do, the quicker it will become a habit. Think of ways to link activity to daily life. For example, you could schedule walking with a co-worker after lunch. Try not to go more than 2 days in a row without being active.

Ways to Turn Excuses Into Solutions: Listed below are some of the common excuses & their solutions.

I'm not more active because...	Ways To Make It Work
...it's just too hard	If you think being more active means hours at the gym, it's just not true! You can start by walking for 10 minutes after dinner, gradually building up to 30 minutes most days.
...the results take too long	Some benefits start right away, even if they don't seem obvious to you. Check your blood sugar before and after you take a walk. You'll likely see a lower number after the walk.
...it's just not fun	Don't force yourself to do something you don't like. You won't stick with it. Try doing a new activity a couple of times before deciding whether to continue with it. If one isn't a good fit, try another.
...it costs too much	The costs for gym memberships and fitness classes can add up. But walking during lunch or after dinner, dancing to your favorite tunes, or working out to online videos are free.
...it's hard to find the time	Find ways to squeeze physical activity into your day-to-day life: take the stairs instead of the elevator, play outside with the kids, get up and move during TV commercials. Try to fit in at least 20 to 25 minutes of activity every day, which will help it become a habit.
...I'm just too old	It's never too late to start being more active! Low-impact activities like pool walking and swimming are examples. Talk to your health care provider about activities that you can do to get started.
...I'm too out of shape	Start slowly and work your way up. Add simple activities daily like walking to the mailbox or park a little farther from the door. Discuss other ideas with your health care provider.

Special Considerations for People With Diabetes: Before starting any physical activity, check with your health care provider to talk about the best physical activities for you. Be sure to discuss which activities you like, how to prepare, and what you should avoid.

Ask Your Doctor or Nurse: **1)** What physical activities are safe for me? **2)** Are there any special things I need to do to protect my feet? **3)** Do I need to make any changes in my medicines before I raise my level of physical activity? **4)** Do I need to eat a snack before I'm active?

- Drink plenty of fluids while being physically active to prevent dehydration (harmful loss of water in the body).
- Make sure to check your blood sugar before being physically active, especially if you take insulin.
 - ✓ If it's *below 100 mg/dL*, you may need to eat a small snack containing 15-30 grams of carbohydrates (2 tablespoons of raisins or ½ cup of fruit juice or regular soda -not diet or glucose tablets so your blood sugar doesn't fall too low while being physically active. Low blood sugar can be very serious.
 - ✓ If it's *above 240 mg/dL*, your blood sugar may be too high (hyperglycemia) to be active safely. If you are physically active when you have high ketone levels, you risk ketoacidosis—a serious diabetes complication that needs immediate treatment. (Test your urine for ketones. Ask your doctor about it.)
- When you're physically active, wear cotton socks and athletic shoes that fit well and are comfortable.
- After being physically active, check your feet for sores, blisters, irritation, cuts, or other injuries. **Call your health care provider if an injury doesn't begin to heal after 2 days.**