

Be Active

When You Have Diabetes



A Guide for Instructors



U.S. Department
of Health and
Human Services

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
DIABETES AND DIGESTIVE
AND KIDNEY DISEASES

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

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Be Active When You Have Diabetes: A Guide for Instructors

Introduction

Research has shown that physical activity is one of the most effective means of treating diabetes. However, making the necessary lifestyle changes to incorporate physical activity can be difficult. By advising people with diabetes how to add physical activity to their lives, you can help them address every aspect of their condition.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is a desktop flip chart. Stand it up by using the back cover as an easel. As you turn the pages, the side facing the patient has illustrations and the side facing you has discussion points. On the right side of some pages are points to remember. Use these points for emphasis as needed.

This guide has a companion patient booklet written at a second- to third-grade reading level. As you go through the guide, give the patient time to fill in answers in the booklet. The pencil  image indicates when the patient, or instructor if needed, should write answers in the booklet.

Being active can help you take care of your diabetes.

In fact, being physically active, or exercising, is one of the most important things you can do to take care of your diabetes.

Physical activity can help you reach your target levels for blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.

Being active can help you take care of your diabetes.



Regular physical activity helps your body and mind.

Physical activity can

- help your body use insulin better
- keep your heart and bones strong
- keep your joints flexible

Regular physical activity also

- helps your balance
- helps you lose weight
- lowers your body fat
- gives you more energy
- lowers your stress levels

Regular physical activity helps your body and mind.



Physical activity can help you lower your chance of having diabetes problems.

When you keep your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels on target, you can lower your chance of having problems with your

- kidneys
- eyes
- nerves
- feet
- legs
- teeth

Physical activity is one way to stay healthy. You can also stay healthy by making wise food choices and taking medicines, if needed.

Remember

Being active can help you keep moving so you can enjoy life.

Physical activity can help you lower your chance of having diabetes problems.



Talk with your health care team before you start to exercise. Learn what kinds of physical activity are best for you. Learn how to plan meals around your physical activity.

Together, you and your health care team will consider your daily schedule, your meal plan, and your diabetes medicines.

- Ask about your medicines—both prescription and over-the-counter—and whether you should change the amount you take before you raise your level of physical activity.
- If you have heart disease, kidney disease, eye problems, or foot problems, ask your health care provider which types of physical activity are safe for you.
- Ask about how to plan meals around your physical activity.

Talk with your health care team before you start to exercise.
Learn what kinds of physical activity are best for you.
Learn how to plan meals around your physical activity.



Four kinds of physical activity are important.

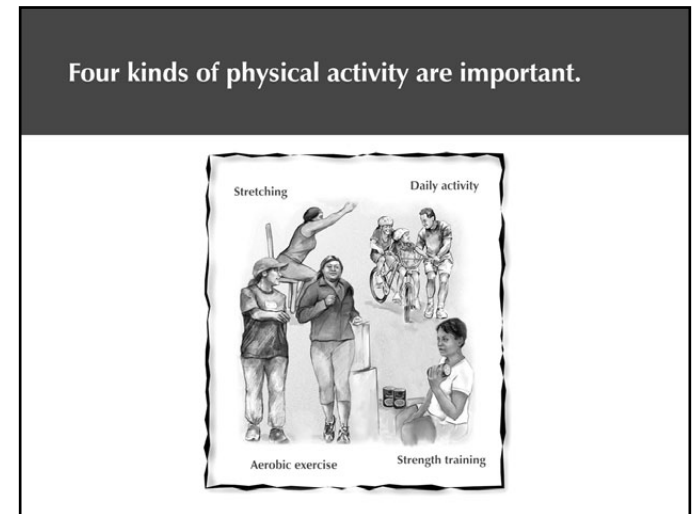
- Daily activity is just moving more in your normal life.
- Aerobic exercise is activity that uses large muscles and makes your heart beat faster. Some examples are brisk walking and swimming.
- Strength training is making your muscles stronger by lifting weights. You can also do sit-ups and leg lifts.
- Stretching is any kind of movement that makes you reach with your body a little farther than you are used to.

Some people like to join a class that puts all of these kinds of physical activity together.

Following are some examples of each kind of physical activity.

Remember

The important thing is to start with a small change. You can add more physical activity as you get used to the change.



Be extra active every day.

Physical activity helps lower your blood sugar to healthy levels.

Being extra active every day can also help you burn calories.

Spend more time moving around than sitting.

Small changes in your activity level can add up to big changes for your diabetes.

For example, park at the far end of the shopping center parking lot and walk to the store.

Daily Activity

Be extra active every day.



Take the stairs.

Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.

Take the stairs.



Work in the garden.

Working in the garden and washing the car are other ways to be active daily.

You can also

- walk around while you talk on the phone
- play with the kids or grandkids
- clean the house

Think about your normal daily activities.

Ask:

How can you add more movement to your day?

- 📎 Write down your ideas.

Remember

Small changes count.

Work in the garden.



Do some aerobic exercise almost every day.

Aerobic exercise is physical activity that

- uses large muscles like your leg muscles
- makes your heart beat faster
- makes you breathe harder

Some examples of aerobic exercise are

- walking fast, or briskly
- swimming
- taking an aerobic exercise class
- riding a bicycle
- playing basketball
- skating

Aerobic Exercise

Do some aerobic exercise almost every day.



Take a brisk walk. Start with 10 minutes. Work your way up to 30 minutes a day.

Walking is a good way to get aerobic exercise. Talk with your health care team about how to warm up and stretch before you walk and how to cool down after you walk.

Start with 10 minutes a day and add a little more time each week. Aim for about 30 minutes a day, most days of the week.

You can even split up your time into several parts. For example, you can take three 10-minute walks, one after each meal.

Walk at the mall when you can't get outside, or use a treadmill.

Remember

Make it fun! Walk with a friend so you can keep each other going.

Take a brisk walk. Start with 10 minutes.
Work your way up to 30 minutes a day.



Dance.

Dancing is another good way to get aerobic exercise. Go out dancing, or put on some music at home and dance around by yourself.

You can also look for dance classes at a gym or community center.

Ask:

What are some kinds of aerobic exercise you might enjoy?

 Write down your ideas.

Dance.



Keep your muscles strong with strength training. Do strength training three times a week.

Doing exercises with hand weights, elastic bands, or weight machines three times a week builds muscle.

You can also do sit-ups and leg lifts.

Muscle burns more calories than fat.

When you have more muscle and less body fat, you'll burn more calories, even between exercise sessions.

Remember

You can use things from around the house, such as canned beans, if you don't have hand weights.

Strength Training

Keep your muscles strong with strength training.
Do strength training three times a week.



You can do strength training at home, at a fitness center, or in a class.

Your health care team can tell you more about strength training and what kinds are best for you.

Ask:

What are some kinds of strength training you might like to do?

✍ Write down your ideas.

Remember

Getting started is important.

Talk with your health care team. It may be best to wait to start strength training until after you are used to aerobic exercise.

You can do strength training at home, at a fitness center, or in a class.



Stretch to feel better.

Stretching is a relaxing way to help your blood flow better, which helps prevent diabetes problems.

Stretching also

- makes you more flexible
- lowers stress
- helps prevent muscle soreness after other types of physical activity

Stretching
Stretch to feel better.



Everyone can stretch.

You can do stretches while sitting in a chair, standing, or lying down.

This woman is doing chair yoga. Chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga for beginners, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Your health care team can tell you what kinds of stretching are best for you.

Think about when you can stretch each day.

Ask:

What kinds of stretching would you like to do?

 Write down your ideas.

Everyone can stretch.



Remember: Being active can help you take care of your diabetes!

Take it slowly.

Start with 10 minutes of physical activity a day.

Add more as you get used to the changes in your life.

Make it fun! Choose activities you enjoy so you can stick with them.

Remember: Being active can help you take care of your diabetes!

Regular physical activity can

- help you with your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels
- lower your chance of having diabetes problems



Four kinds of physical activity are important:

- Daily activity
- Aerobic exercise
- Strength training
- Stretching



Get started!

The next page has a list of questions to ask your health care team.

Your booklet includes a page to write down your physical activity plan.




You can also use a notebook to keep track of how often you exercise and what physical activities you do.

Writing down a plan and keeping track of your exercise and physical activities will help you succeed.

Get your family to be active with you. Physical activity will help them, too.

Be proud of yourself for any changes you make!

Get started!



- ✓ Talk with your health care team.
- ✓ Make a plan.
- ✓ Find an exercise buddy.

What to Ask Your Health Care Team

This list is to help you remember what to talk about with your health care team before you begin a physical activity program.

Take this list with you when you go to see your health care team.

 Write in the answers.

Should I change my medicine or my meals?
When should I take my prescription medicine?
How much should I take before I exercise?
When should I take my over-the-counter medicine?
Should I eat before I exercise? Or after?
What should I do if I have low blood sugar when I exercise?

Which activities are safe for me?
Daily activities:
Aerobic exercise:
Strength training:
Stretching:

My Physical Activity Plan (sample starter plan)

This plan is just an example for you.

Include your favorite activities in your plan.

Don't make your plan too hard.

Write down what you do each day to keep track of your progress.

Reward yourself when you do even a small part of your plan.

You can do it!

Now you are ready to make your own plan.

Remember

You don't have to start every part of your plan at the same time.

My daily activities
Every day I will: play catch with the dog walk up the stairs at work park at the far end of the parking lot
My aerobic exercise
Most days I will: walk around my block
When: Tuesday through Sunday, after dinner
For how long: 10 minutes
My buddy: my daughter
Backup plan: walk at the mall if it rains
My strength training
Three times a week I will: lift hand weights
When: T-TH-Sat, 8 a.m.
How many times: 15
My daily stretches
Every day I will: do chair yoga
When: before bed
For how long: 10 minutes

My Physical Activity Plan

Now you need to look at the ideas you wrote down and make a plan.

Ask:

What ideas do you have for increasing your daily activity?

 Fill these lines in.

Ask:

What aerobic exercise would you like to do?

 Fill these lines in.

Ask:

What type of strength training would you like to do?

 Fill these lines in.

Ask:

What kind of stretching would you like to do?

 Fill these lines in.

Remember, this is just a starter plan.

Talk with your health care team about your plan before you start.

You can change your plan when you find out what works for you and what you enjoy doing.

Remember

Now that you have a plan, is the plan too hard?

My daily activities
Every day I will:
My aerobic exercise
Most days I will:
When:
For how long:
My buddy:
Backup plan:
My strength training
Three times a week I will:
When:
How many times:
My daily stretches
Every day I will:
When:
For how long:

For more information, call to get these free booklets, or read them online.

- **Active at Any Size**
www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/activeatany/active.html
- **Walking: A Step in the Right Direction**
www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/walking/walkingbro/walking.htm
- **Physical Activity and Weight Control**
www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/pubs/physact.htm

You can order these free booklets from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) Weight-control Information Network.

Toll-free: 1-877-946-4627

Another free booklet with this information and more details is

- **What I need to know about Physical Activity and Diabetes**
www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/physical_ez

You can order this booklet from the NIDDK.

Toll-free: 1-800-860-8747

Note to instructor: You can order these booklets ahead of time to give out as supplemental information, or the patient can order them over the phone or read them online.

More free resources about diet and physical activity for people with diabetes include

- ***Tips for Teens with Diabetes: Be Active!***

www.ndep.nih.gov/publications/PublicationDetail.aspx?Pubid=99

You can order this tip sheet from the National Diabetes Education Program.

Toll-free: 1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337)

- ***Exercise & Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide from the National Institute on Aging***

www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/ExerciseGuide

You can order this booklet from the National Institute on Aging.

Toll-free: 1-800-222-2225

For More Information

To get more information about taking care of diabetes and related conditions, contact

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www.yourdiabetesinfo.org

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