

# Diabetes and Exercise

Regular exercise is a key part of your diabetes plan. Exercise can include any type of physical activity that gets you moving such as walking, dancing or doing yard work.

Exercise is important because it helps keep your blood sugar in a healthy range. It can also:

- Lower stress and increase energy.
- Increase strength and range of motion.
- Help control blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Help insulin work better in your body.



## Choose an Exercise You Enjoy

You don't have to run a marathon or lift 200 pounds to exercise. Your goal is to find an exercise you enjoy so you can stick with it and stay active.

If you haven't exercised in a while, you'll want to start out slow. Adding a 5-minute walk to your day might be a good start. Work up to at least 30 minutes a day. Just remember to talk to your doctor before you get started.

## Types of Exercise

You can choose to do aerobic or stretching exercises, or a little of both. Aerobic exercises get your body moving and your heart rate pumping. Stretching exercises keep your joints flexible and help you avoid stiffness.

### Aerobic Exercises

- Fast walking
- Dancing
- Riding a bike
- Swimming
- Jogging or running
- Low impact aerobics



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## Stretching Exercises

- Basic stretches
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Tai chi
- If you stretch, try to relax. You should only feel mild tension in the muscles. Hold the stretch for 5 to 15 seconds and stop if you feel pain or discomfort. Ask your doctor if there are any exercises you should not do.



## Safety Tips



**It's important for you to exercise safely.**  
**Be sure to:**

- Drink plenty of sugar-free fluids like water.
- Check your blood sugar before and after exercise to make sure that you are not experiencing low blood sugar.
- Wear good-fitting shoes.
- Check your feet before and after exercise. Look for blisters, redness or sores because these can lead to

infection. If you find anything wrong with your feet, call your doctor right away. Do not do any more exercise until your doctor says it's okay.

- Include a warm-up and cool-down with each workout.
- Avoid intense outdoor workouts if it's very hot, humid, smoggy or cold.

## Things to Carry When You Exercise

**Another important safety tip is to always be prepared. This means carrying or having these things close by during exercise:**

- Phone numbers of family and doctors in case of an emergency.
- Cell phone or change to make a phone call.
- Blood sugar meter.
- Diabetes I.D. bracelet or necklace. If you don't have an I.D. bracelet or necklace, ask your pharmacist or doctor where you can get one.
- Emergency food to treat low blood sugar. This might be glucose tablets, hard candies, regular soft drinks or a tablespoon of sugar.



Source: American Diabetes Association

