

Get Active

Chapter 1

Getting Active & Starting an Exercise Program

You Will Learn About:

1. How sitting less and moving more helps prevent disease
 - a. How often do I sit and why does it matter?
 - b. How can I sit less?
2. What physical activity is and how it helps manage diabetes
3. What exercise is and how it helps manage diabetes
4. How to start exercising
 - a. What do I need to do before getting started?
 - b. How can I schedule my exercise?
 - c. What happens to my blood sugar when I exercise?
 - d. What exercise should I start with?

1. How Sitting Less and Moving More Helps Prevent Disease

How often do I sit and how can I change it?

Most adults spend about 10 hours a day sitting down. 10 hours takes up most of the hours you are awake.

Sitting for long periods of time is not good for your health. Your body slowly changes the longer you sit. When you don't use your muscles, they get weak. Sitting increases your risk of getting diseases, like heart disease, certain cancers and diabetes. If you sit a lot, there are simple things you can do to change how long you sit for.

How can I sit less?

The first step to change your sitting habits is exercise. Exercise improves your health and lowers your risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes. But exercise is not enough. If you exercise but still sit often, you are still at risk for disease. You need to break up your sitting time.

Replace sitting with standing or movement. Some examples are:

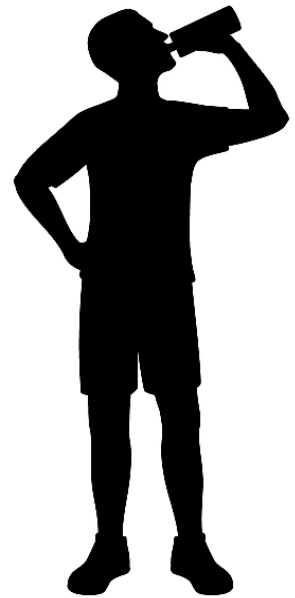
- Switch to standing when you:
 - Work at your desk (or in meetings)
 - Take public transit
 - Talk (or text) on the telephone
 - Watch television
 - Use a computer
 - Read the newspaper
 - Fold clothes
 - Meet with friends and family

Get Active

Chapter 1: Getting Active & Starting an Exercise Program

- Park further from work so you walk a bit farther to work
- Use the stairs more rather than elevators and escalators
- Drink more water (unless your doctor has told you to limit your fluid intake) while you work so you take regular bathroom breaks
- Set an alarm on your computer or phone to remind you to get up and stand or move around every 20 minutes

Break up your sitting time slowly. Set small goals such as sitting less during your morning routine. Lower your total sitting time to less than 4 to 6 hours a day. Over time, it will be easy to sit less and move more.



2. What Physical Activity is and How it Helps Manage Diabetes

Physical activity is any body movement that uses energy. Physical activities can be done with friends or family, and should be fun for you. Physical activity helps you connect with others and commit to manage your diabetes and good health. There are many types of physical activity that you can do such as:

- Walking to the store
- Household chores or work on your home
- Working in the garden
- Shopping
- Playing with your children outdoors
- Playing a sport (e.g., golfing)
- Learning a new skill or activity



All of these activities are helpful to manage your diabetes. Include more physical activity in your weekly routine. Once you are more active, the next step is planned exercise.

3. What Exercise is and How it Helps Manage Diabetes

Exercise is a type of physical activity that is planned and structured to improve your fitness level and muscle strength. Exercise:

- Is done at a moderate to vigorous intensity level
- Should last for about 30 minutes or longer (which can be broken up with rest breaks or into 10 minute intervals throughout your day)
- Is done on most days of the week (5 days each week)

Exercise is a central part of good health. Exercise helps control risk factors for diabetes, heart disease and stroke. There are many reasons to start doing exercise. Exercise:

- Lowers blood sugar. Sugar is used by your muscles when you exercise
- Improves your body's response to insulin (improves insulin sensitivity)
- Improves your fitness level
- Lowers blood pressure
- Lowers the effects of stress on your body

- Lowers cravings to smoke when you try to quit
- Improves HDL (good) cholesterol
- Improves muscle strength
- Lowers body fat
- Leads to stronger bones and better joint health
- Improves how you feel about yourself
- Raises your energy level
- Improves the quality of your life

4. How to Start Doing Exercise

What do I need to do before I get started?

Tell your doctor before you start to exercise. Low to moderate exercise is safe and can help you manage your diabetes.

Below is a list of health issues that may mean you need to plan your exercise with your doctor. If anything on the list applies to you, talk to your family doctor. You will need further testing before you can start your exercise program.

- I have pain or discomfort in my chest, neck, upper back, jaw or arms
- I am short of breath at rest or with mild exercise
- I feel dizzy or have fainted
- I am awake in the night feeling short of breath
- I feel short of breath when I lie down and sitting up helps
- My ankles are swollen
- My heart skips beats or races
- I have a heart problem

- I take medicine(s) for my heart
- I have a heart murmur
- I have pain in my lower leg(s) when I walk
- I feel tired or short of breath just doing normal things like taking out the garbage
- I want to do intense exercise. But, I get breathless when I do intense exercises such as jogging, weight training, hockey or soccer

How can I schedule my exercise?

Look at your week ahead to find time to exercise. Schedule times you could set aside for exercise. Start with a 10 minute block. Every few weeks add 5 to 10 minutes to your exercise time. Increase the amount you exercise to 30 to 60 minutes total. Large chunks of time are sometimes hard to find in your schedule. That is why breaking your exercise into 10 minutes at a time can help. These 10 minutes of exercise can happen throughout the day. Once you schedule your exercise in your calendar you will find it helps you take action.

What happens to my blood sugar when I exercise?

Your blood sugar will change when you exercise. Record your blood sugar before and after exercise for the first five sessions. Your blood sugar tells you how your body reacts to exercise. Notice your blood sugar patterns and be able to plan ahead in case of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).

Exercise is a great way to lower your blood sugar. Many people are pleased to notice how much it can lower their blood sugar. But, you must also be aware that exercise when combined with specific diabetes medicines can cause your blood sugar to become too low. If you are prescribed insulin or a medicine from the Secretagogue class of medicines you are at risk for **low blood sugar**.

Safety Alert!

You are at risk for low blood sugar (especially after exercise) if you take any of the following diabetes medicines:

- Insulin
- Secretagogue medicines such as:
 - Diamicon (Gliclazide)
 - Amaryl (Glimepiride)
 - Glyburide (Diabeta)
 - Repaglinide (Gluconorm)

Recall, low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) happens when your blood sugar is less than 4 mmol/L or you have the signs or symptoms of low blood sugar (e.g., feeling shaky, easy to bother, difficulty concentrating). Have a fast-acting carbohydrate with you, such as juice or sugar (glucose) tablets. Drink or eat this carbohydrate if your blood sugar is low. Read Section, 'Treat Diabetes: Chapter 4' on Low Blood Sugar to learn more.

What exercise should I start with?

There are many kinds of exercise you can do. Some types of exercises include aerobic training, resistance training and sports. Each exercise has its own benefits. Do different types of exercise together to create a well-rounded exercise program. Start with an exercise you enjoy and that fits into your lifestyle. Talk to your exercise team for an exercise program that is safe and effective for you.

Summary:

- Stand up or walk around for 2 to 3 minutes for every 20 minutes of sitting
- Physical activity and exercise can both help manage your blood sugar
- Daily physical activity can help you start doing exercise
- Low to moderate exercise is safe for you
- Look at your week ahead to schedule your exercise
- Know if you take a diabetes medicine that can make your blood sugar go too low (hypoglycemia) after exercise