

# Be Active for a **Healthier You**



*diabetes*



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## Be Active...for a Healthier You

Think you don't need to worry about being physically active? Surveys indicate that 2 out of 3 Americans are not active enough. Technological advances and conveniences have made our lives easier and less active.

## Physical activity doesn't have to be hard work

Simply put, physical activity can be anything that gets you moving. You can be active without going to a gym, getting special exercise equipment, or hiring a sports trainer. Instead, dancing, yard work, and even just walking are all forms of activity that can improve your strength, muscles, bones, and coordination. Physical activity can also help you lose weight and feel physically and mentally better.



## Getting started on fitness

How much physical activity do you need? When you've been physically inactive and have to lose weight, starting a regular activity program can seem like a nearly impossible goal. But your health care provider can help you design a good program that's both fun and fits in with your daily activities.

To help you get started, the American Diabetes Association says that your health care provider may need to check out your level of fitness to find out what kinds of physical activities will be most helpful to you. You should review those activity choices, decide on the ones you think you can do, and include those in your daily life. It helps to set a specific physical activity goal. Once you have a specific goal for yourself, make a plan (what will you do, how often, for how long), and write it down.

Also, remember that physical activity may cause a change in your body's glucose (blood sugar) level. So work with your health care provider to make sure you know how to check your glucose levels before and after physical activity, what to look for, and what to do in case your glucose rises or falls too much.

## Get off that couch!

To avoid the major risks for developing heart disease and type 2 diabetes, you don't have to run a marathon! Regular physical activity starts with setting goals you know you can achieve. By following some of the simple suggestions below, you can increase your physical activity and your long-term health:

- Use the steps, not elevators or escalators
- Take the dog for a walk
- Spend less time watching television or playing video games
- Try gardening
- Get off the bus one stop before your usual stop and walk the extra distance to wherever you are going

Regular physical activity doesn't have to be done all at one time. It's okay to spread it out over the course of the whole day.

- At first, start your physical activity slowly for 30 minutes, 3 days a week\*
- Then build to 45 minutes of physical activity at least 5 days a week\*

\*Consult your health care provider before beginning any physical activity.



- A total of about 30 to 45 minutes of physical activity each day—in any combination of walking, gardening, climbing stairs, or even playing with the kids—will burn off 100 to 200 calories a day

In addition, don't worry about how hard you should be working out. Light to moderate levels of physical activity are an excellent start. What really matters is to make it a regular part of your day. The more you move around, the more energy you'll begin to have.

## What can you expect?

Nothing at first. But the payoff—a reduced risk of heart attack and type 2 diabetes—should come if you keep at it. In fact, studies have shown that losing just 5% to 7% of your body weight through increased physical activity and cutting down on calories and fat can often prevent or delay your chance of getting diabetes. Over time, you may slim down, but it's important to remember that losing weight happens slowly and not to stop.

## Knowledge is power, so learn to live.

For more information, visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>. It is a great source of information on how physical activity and proper diet can help keep you healthy.

## Stick with the program!

Starting a physical activity program is easier than staying on it! Before beginning, discuss your plans with your health care provider.

## Here's what fitness experts recommend:

### 1. Slow down.

Most beginners usually walk, run, or exercise too hard at first and then quit after a few workouts because they don't like the pain. Sure, you should feel tired after physical activity, but later on you'll feel refreshed and energized.

### 2. Select activities that you enjoy and that fit into your daily schedule.

Try walking or some other type of physical activity before working or going to school. Or maybe you prefer evenings. There is no right or wrong time of day for physical activity. Whatever works best for you is fine.

### 3. Find a partner.

Physical activity with someone else doubles the chance that you'll stick with it.

### 4. Make a plan and reward yourself.

Set realistic goals for yourself and write them down.

### 5. Chart your progress.

Keep a diary of your physical activity and reward yourself when you meet specific goals, such as pedaling that extra mile or walking for a full hour. Go to a movie or buy yourself something. You've earned it!

