

# Be Active for a Healthier You

Physical activity doesn't have to be hard work. 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 better physically and mentally.

## Getting started

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.

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. Review 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, make a plan (what you will do, how often, for how long), and write it down.

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

Aerobic exercise is when you get your heart rate up by brisk walking, biking, or dancing.

- 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.
- You may want to start exercising 10 minutes 3 times a day, building to 30 minutes.

This health information is being provided for general educational purposes only. Your health care provider is the single best source of information regarding your health. Please consult your health care provider if you have any questions about your health or treatment.



**The American  
Diabetes Association  
recommends you  
do 150 minutes of  
aerobic exercise in  
a week.**



## What can you expect?

Don't give up! It is important to remember that losing weight can take time. 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 may delay and reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

## Get off that couch!

Surveys indicate that 2 out of 3 Americans are not active enough. New technology has made our lives easier and less active. By following some of the simple suggestions below, you can increase your physical activity and improve your long-term health:

### 1. Slow down.

Beginners often walk, run, or exercise too hard at first and then quit after a few workouts because they don't like the pain. You might 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.

- Use the steps, not elevators or escalators.
- Take the dog for a walk or try gardening.

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

### 3. Find a partner.

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

### 4. Make a plan.

Set realistic goals for yourself and write them down.

### 5. Chart your progress and reward yourself.

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!



The more you  
move around, the  
more energy you'll  
begin to have.

