



# Diabetes and Physical Activity

Getting enough exercise is important for everyone, and equally as important if you have diabetes. Physical activity helps the muscles become more sensitive to insulin, which allows the muscles to better pull glucose into the cells. This naturally lowers blood glucose and can help you better control your diabetes.

In addition to improving your muscle's sensitivity to insulin, glucose can enter your muscles using a separate mechanism that does not need insulin. This can be helpful if your pancreas is not producing enough insulin. Being more active also helps you lose weight, which will reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease and can further improve your diabetes.

Another benefit of physical activity is that it increases "feel good" endorphins which will lower stress, increase your energy levels, and generally help you feel better. Getting off the couch will not only improve your health but could also help you take less medications or insulin.

150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity a week is recommended. **Some ideas for moderate intensity aerobic activity include:**

- Riding a bike – try saving gas and biking to work!
- Hiking – try a new trail this weekend.
- Dancing – check out your area for dancing lessons, or dance around your house.
- Aerobic classes – you can find these at most gyms, or even at your local senior center.
- Try workout shows on television.
  - Is the show during a bad time for you? Record it!
  - There are great low impact options like "Sit and Be Fit" that allow you to get exercise from the comfort of a chair.
- Check out workout DVD's from your local library- it's free!

Managing diabetes can be frustrating and trying to include physical activity may seem daunting at first, but start slowly and begin to make changes gradually and you will become more and more comfortable.

## Tip:

Before you start an exercise program, talk to your doctor to learn how to protect yourself from low blood glucose.

