

## Getting Motivated

If you are having trouble getting interested in physical activity, try to imagine the good things about being more active.

Find two good things on the list below that would motivate you to be more active. Post these around the house to help remind you of why you are getting active!

- It will make me feel better.
- I will look better.
- I will have more energy.
- I will feel better about myself.
- I will sleep better.
- It will help me manage my weight.
- It will make me healthier.
- I will have fun.
- It will help me manage stress.
- I will be able to work without tiring.
- It will give me more self-confidence.
- I will feel stronger.
- My blood sugar will improve.
- Any other

## Ways to Increase Physical Activity Throughout the Day:

- Take the stairs (instead of elevators and escalators).
- Shovel or sweep your own walkway, driveway, or deck (take lots of rest breaks, and do not push too hard).
- Carry your own grocery bags.
- Avoid sitting for long periods of time.
- Get up and stretch every 20-30 minutes at work or while watching TV.
- Garden.
- Join bowling, curling, or other recreational group.

## Ways to Get in More Walking:

- Walk to do your errands. If it is too far, park 2 – 3 blocks away and walk from there!
- Push-mow your own lawn.
- Walk to get the mail/newspaper.
- Take a dog for a walk.
- Walk around the mall or recreation facility.
- Wear a pedometer, and gradually increase the steps you take each day.

### Remember:

Becoming more physically active can be a challenge! Many people do not know where to start.

- **Start right here, right now.**
- **Start slowly; have fun.**
- **Ask your diabetes care provider to help you with the first steps.**

When you start small with something you feel you can really do, you will feel better; then you can do more. There are tips on the back of this sheet to help you identify some common barriers to being active and ways to overcome them.



## What is Physical Activity?

Physical activity is any form of movement that causes your body to burn calories. This can be as simple as walking, gardening, cleaning house, and many other activities you may already do!

## Physical Activity and Diabetes

During a physical activity, active muscles use up sugar (glucose) as a source of energy. Regular physical activity helps to prevent sugar from building up in your blood.

## Lack of Physical Activity

is one of the major risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

Many people do not get enough physical activity to be healthy in today's society. Technology and modern living have removed many regular forms of physical activity from our daily lives.

- Cars replace walking and biking.
- Elevators and escalators replace stairs.
- Dishwashers replace doing dishes by hand.
- Computers replace manual labour.
- Snow blowers and ride-on lawn mowers replace physical yard work.
- TV and computer games replace fun physical activities for both children and adults.

Because of modern living, it is important to think about being physically active each day.

**Adding more physical activity to your day is one of the MOST IMPORTANT things you can do to help manage your diabetes and improve your health.**

Check out the other parts of this handout to find out more about how physical activity can help you prevent and manage diabetes.

# Benefits of Physical Activity



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## Benefits of Physical Activity

### What are the short-term benefits of **INCREASING** my physical activity?

- Lowers your blood sugar within 1 hour.
- Gives you more energy and strength during the day.
- Decreases stress, anxiety, and fatigue.
- Improves relaxation and sleep.
- Improves confidence and well-being.
- Lets you have fun and involve family and friends.

### What are the long-term benefits if I **keep at it**?

- Improved blood sugar control.
- Helps to maintain or lose weight.
- Lowered blood pressure.
- Stronger bones and muscles.
- Lower risk of diabetes complications such as eye, heart, and kidney disease.
- Improved quality of life.

## Getting Started

Did you know that being physically active does not have to start with a formal exercise program?

There are lots of things you can do to get moving – they will all benefit your health. The key is to simply start moving a little bit more.

Instead of using a car, a computer, or a machine, use your own body to do things. You will be investing in your health each time you do!

Start small by trying to do a little more physical activity at least a few days of the week. Choose something that you might enjoy. For example, if you like the outdoors, try a nature walk or gardening. You can build up to doing more physical activity as you feel comfortable.

## Identifying Barriers to Physical Activity

A barrier is something that stops you from doing what you want to or should be doing.

Using the space below, list your top three barriers to physical activity. You can do this on your own or with the help of a diabetes care provider.

### The top three barriers that stop me from being physically active are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

It is good to think of ways to overcome your barriers to physical activity. This can help you turn your barriers from mountains into molehills.

## Tips to Overcoming Barriers

### This section lists the strategies to overcome the most common barriers to physical activity.

- Check the three barriers that match your list.
- Try the tips provided to overcome your three barriers.
- If you don't see your barriers listed here, ask your diabetes care provider for ways to help.



### I have no time.

- ✓ Every minute of physical activity has health benefits, especially for people with type 2 diabetes.

Start with 5 to 10 minutes at a time; at different times throughout the day. This may be all you need to get going.

### I am too tired.

- ✓ Regular physical activity will give you more energy and help you sleep better.

It may be hard to get started, but once you start, you'll feel better. In the end, it will be worth the effort.

### I do not have the motivation.

- ✓ Start with 5 minutes of physical activity, and allow yourself to stop if you are not enjoying it.

That way you can at least start, and once you are into it, you may want to keep going.

### It costs too much to join a gym.

- ✓ You do not need a gym membership or a personal trainer to be active.

You can do simple things around the house or in your neighborhood that do not cost money – go for a short walk, or start a project in your yard.

### I cannot be physically active on my own.

- ✓ Start by sharing your activity plans with friends or family.

You may be surprised by the support you receive. Doing your activity with others can help to get you started and keep you going. Your local recreation centre or staff at your Diabetes Centre may also be able to help you find activity partners.



## Tips to Address Concerns About Diabetes and Physical Activity

### I am afraid of health complications.

- ✓ Light to moderate physical activity

(such as walking, working around the house, and gardening) are safe and important ways to manage your diabetes. Start slowly and you will see benefits develop over time.

### I am afraid of injury or re-injury.

- ✓ Take care of any injuries.

It is difficult to be active if you are hurting. See your doctor or physiotherapist about any nagging pains that may limit your physical activity. Remember to take good care of your feet, and always wear proper foot wear.

### I am afraid of getting low blood sugar.

- ✓ Plan ahead.

It is unlikely that you will have lows if you eat regularly and monitor your blood sugar. Always carry a form of quick-acting sugar with you such as hard candy. Discuss how to avoid lows with your diabetes care provider.

**When choosing a barrier to work on, it is good to work on one at a time. Pick one to focus on each week for the next three weeks, and see how you do! Sometimes changing your thoughts about barriers to physical activity is all you need to get going.**