

A Simple Walking Plan

It may be hard to get regular physical activity. A walking plan may be a good place to start. Follow the plan here to gradually increase your frequency, intensity, and time of walking. Using a step monitor (e.g. pedometer) can be helpful in tracking your activity. Diabetes Canada recommends 150 minutes of aerobic exercise a week.

Walking Plan Progression

Program Stage	Week	Frequency (days/week)	Intensity		Duration (min)
			Exertion Level	RPE (10 pt)	
Initial stage	1	2	Light	2	10
	2	2	Light	2	10 - 15
	3	2 - 3	Moderate	3	15
	4	3	Moderate	3	15
	5 - 7	3 - 4	Moderate - Somewhat hard	3 - 4	15 - 20
Improvement*	8 - 10	4	Moderate - Somewhat hard	3 - 4	20
	11 - 13	4	Somewhat hard	4	20 - 25
	14 - 16	4	Somewhat hard	4 - 5	25
	17 - 20	4	Somewhat hard	4 - 5	25 - 30
	21 - 24	4 - 5	Somewhat hard - Hard	4 - 5	25 - 30
	25 +	3 - 5 +	Moderate - Hard	3 - 5	30+
	Maintenance				

\*Start at the improvement stage if you are somewhat active and have no medical limitations. If walking is difficult for you, your diabetes care provider can help you come up with some different physical activity options to benefit your diabetes.

RPE = Rating of Perceived Exertion

- 0

Rest
- 1

Very light
- 2

Light
- 3

Moderate
- 4

Somewhat hard
- 5

Hard (breathing deeply)
- 6
- 7

Very hard (out of breath)
- 8
- 9
- 10

Maximal

Intensity is Important

- Light (RPE 1 - 2)

easy walking, golf, gardening, dusting, laundry, stretching, yoga, curling, bowling
- Moderate (RPE 3 - 6)

brisk walking, climbing stairs, mowing the lawn, swimming, dancing, biking
- Vigorous\* (RPE ≥ 7)

running, fast cycling, hockey, basketball, gym workouts
- \*Vigorous physical activity

can be started after a period of regular physical activity and with the approval of your doctor or with the guidance of a qualified exercise professional.



Regular Physical Activity and Diabetes

**Regular physical activity** can slow and prevent the progression of diabetes. Diabetes Canada recommends getting 150 minutes of aerobic exercise a week.

During physical activity, active muscles allow your body to use sugar more efficiently. This effect lasts for 1-2 days, so regular physical activity is important to better manage your blood sugar and your diabetes.

Technology and modern living have removed many regular forms of physical activity from our daily lives. This is another important reason to think about being physically active each day.

What activities can you do?

- Physical activity comes in many forms. You can obtain health benefits from continuing to do simple things such as:
- Taking the stairs
  - Working in the garden
  - Playing with your kids
  - Mowing your lawn
  - Walking around the mall
  - Cycling, swimming, or golfing

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

Check out the rest of this handout to see how to plan regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Planning for Regular Physical Activity

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Deciding to be Active on a Regular Basis

We know that being physically active is one of the **MOST IMPORTANT** things you can do to help manage your diabetes and improve your health. We also know that it can be difficult to get started.

Use the space provided to look at the Pros and Cons of Inactivity. List some of the reasons why you may not be active on a regular basis.

The PROS (enjoyable things) about being INACTIVE:

- 1. I have time to do things I want to do.
- 2. I don't have to try anything new.
- 3. I can relax.
- 4.
- 5.

The Cons (drawbacks) of Inactivity

By remaining inactive:

- 1. My diabetes will get harder to manage.
- 2. I will continue to gain weight.
- 3. My diabetes complications may get worse (eye, kidney, and nerve problems and risk for heart disease).
- 4. My quality of life will decline.
- 5.

Consider some of the reasons why you may not be as active as you would like.

The CONS (unpleasant things) about being ACTIVE:

- 1. Physical activity takes time.
- 2. Exercise is difficult.
- 3. It might cause low blood sugar.
- 4.

Now compare this to the PROS of regular physical activity. Add any others that are important to you.

Pros (benefits) of Regular Physical Activity

By being active on a regular basis, I can have:

- 1. Better blood sugar control (lower A1C).
- 2. Better weight control.
- 3. Lower blood pressure.
- 4. Stronger bones and muscles.
- 5. Lower risk for heart attack, stroke, cancer, and diabetes complications such as eye, heart, kidney, and nerve disease.
- 6. More energy.
- 7. Improved quality of life.
- 8.
- 9.

What is more important to you?

Compare your lists. If reasons for being active in the long-term outweigh the reasons for staying inactive, then you are ready to take the first steps toward regular physical activity.

Refer to the next section of this handout to take steps toward a physically active lifestyle. You can do this on your own or with the help of a diabetes care provider. Sometimes a little help is all we need to get moving in the right direction.

Taking the First Steps

Maybe all you need is a little help to overcome common challenges to being active.

✓ Making physical activity a priority.

Physical activity is something your body needs everyday to be healthy. Treat physical activity like sleep or food.

✓ Fitting physical activity into your day.

Pick the same time each day to be physically active. Scheduling physical activity as part of your regular routine may help you to be more active. It is also important to avoid sitting for long periods of time. Try to interrupt sitting time by getting up briefly every 20-30 minutes.

✓ You do not have to try something new.

Regular physical activity can be something you already do; for example, gardening or walking. Just being more regular with your activity will benefit your diabetes.

✓ Do not let your diabetes stop you.

For most people with diabetes, walking and light- to moderate-intensity activities are safe and helpful. Remember to take good care of your feet and to be aware of your blood sugar when being physically active.

✓ Physical activity and exercise get easier.

When you are active, your heart rate increases; you may breathe a little harder, sweat, or even feel a little sore the next morning. This is normal. With time, as your fitness improves, all physical activities in your life will feel easier and be more enjoyable!

✓ Sticking with it pays off.

If you are having trouble getting going with physical activity, try making a plan. There may be a few false starts in the beginning. This is normal. Try to see your next opportunity for physical activity as a step closer to a regular routine.

Making a Plan

It is important to think about **what**, for **how long**, **when**, **where**, and **how** you will be physically active.

Write down your plans below – the more specific and personal you make your plans, the more likely you are to follow through.

What?

I plan to be active on a regular basis by:

How Long?

During the next week, I plan to do my activity for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes each time.

When?

I plan to be active on: (check off the time & days)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM							
PM							

Where?

A good place to do my planned activity is (for example, around the grounds at work):

How?

The major thing that will prevent me from doing my activity consistently is (for example, waiting until the end of the day to do it):

My strategy to overcome that challenge is (for example, do my walking during the day):

Now you are ready to go! Have fun with your activity, and enjoy the benefits of a physically active lifestyle.