

Two types of physical activity are most important for managing diabetes: aerobic exercise and strength training.

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise helps your body use insulin better. It makes your heart and bones strong, relieves stress, improves blood circulation, and reduces your risk for heart disease by lowering blood glucose and blood pressure and improving cholesterol levels.

We Recommend: Aiming for 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity aerobic exercise at least 5 days a week or a total of 150 minutes per week. Spread your activity out over at least 3 days during the week and try not to go more than 2 days in a row without exercising.

Note: Moderate intensity means that you are working hard enough that you can talk, but not sing, during the activity. Vigorous intensity means you cannot say more than a few words without pausing for a breath during the activity.

Get Started

If you haven't been very active recently, you can start out with 5 or 10 minutes a day of activity and increase your activity sessions by a few minutes each week. Over time, you'll see your fitness improve and you'll find that you're able to do more.

If you're just starting out, [you may want to check out our starting walking plan](#).

Find the Time

If your busy schedule doesn't allow you to exercise for a 30-minute period during the day, you have the option to break up your 30 minutes into bouts of 10 minutes or more. Research has shown that the health benefits are similar when you do this!

For example, you might take a brisk 10-minute walk after each meal. Or you could try doing 15 minutes of aerobics in the morning before work and another 15 minutes when you get home.

If you are trying to lose weight and keep it off, most people need to do more than 30 minutes of aerobic exercise a day.

Below are some examples of aerobic activities:

- Brisk walking (outside or inside on a treadmill)
- Bicycling/Stationary cycling indoors
- Dancing
- Low-impact aerobics
- Swimming or water aerobics
- Playing tennis
- Stair climbing
- Jogging/Running
- Hiking
- Rowing
- Ice-skating or roller-skating
- Cross-country skiing
- Moderate-to-heavy gardening

Strength Training

Strength training (also called resistance training) makes your body more sensitive to insulin and can lower blood glucose. It helps to maintain and build strong muscles and bones, reducing your risk for osteoporosis and bone fractures.

The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn – even when your body is at rest.

Preventing muscle loss by strength training is also the key to maintaining an independent lifestyle as you age.

We Recommend: doing some type of strength training 2-3 days each week in addition to aerobic activity.

Below are examples of strength training activities:

- Weight machines or free weights at the gym
- Using resistance bands
- Lifting light weights or objects like canned goods or water bottles at home
- Calisthenics or exercises that use your own body weight to work your muscles (examples are pushups, sit ups, squats, lunges, wall-sits, and planks)
- Classes that involve strength training
- Other activities that build and keep muscle like heavy gardening

There are other types of activity that you can add to your fitness routine. Learn more about [activity throughout the day](#), [stretching](#), and [balance exercises](#).

Resource: <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/fitness/types-of-activity/what-we-recommend.html?print=t>