

CHAPTER FOUR



GETTING REGULAR EXERCISE

What is exercise and how can it help?

Exercise and physical activity are very similar. The National Institute of Aging defines “physical activity” as any voluntary body movement that burns calories. Exercise is a physical activity that is planned and is done over and over again. The goal is to improve your health by increasing activity.

Getting regular exercise is a major part of treating your diabetes. Exercise is one of the healthiest things you can do.

In general, exercise can:

- Help your body use insulin better.
- Lower your blood sugar.
- Burn calories (weight control).
- Improve your muscle tone and how your heart works.
- Improve sense of well-being.
- Increase your energy.

WHO CAN EXERCISE?

WHO CAN EXERCISE OR SIMPLY INCREASE THEIR ACTIVITY? **ABSOLUTELY EVERYONE!!!!**

Please remember: You should not exercise when your blood sugar is very high (250+) or if ketones are present in your urine. (Ask your diabetes educator to explain.)

People with diabetes should have a complete medical check up before starting to exercise. Your doctor can tell you what type of exercises to do and how hard to work out. Many people with diabetes will be told to exercise in a group with medical supervision. Exercising in a group can also be a lot of fun.

Sometimes it helps to exercise with someone. See if you can partner up with a family member or friend.



GETTING REGULAR EXERCISE

Did your doctor prescribe special exercises or activities for you to do? Write down what they are.

What exercises or activities do you now do regularly?

Were you able to follow what your doctor told you?
What things got in your way? What things helped?

How can you improve on what you are already doing?

Examples of exercises or activities you can do at home:

- Climbing stairs
- Gardening
- Housework
- Jogging or walking
- Raking leaves
- Shoveling snow
- Swimming

Can you think of some others?

Deciding how much exercise is enough!

The best advice we can give you is to check with your doctor.

Once he or she has given you the OK to exercise, it is time to get started. Using/burning a certain number of calories is one way of deciding how much exercise to do.

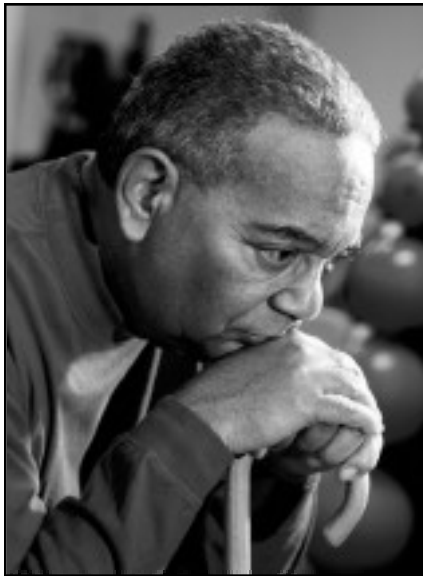


Here are some examples of some exercises and the number of calories they burn.

Activity	Calories burned per hour
Walking	250-450
Swimming, jogging, or cycling	450-600
Climbing stairs & jumping rope	More than 400

Getting past the barriers!

Here are some barriers that can prevent you from exercising. Let's discuss these and find a way past the barriers to a healthier lifestyle.



- Too tired
- Not enough time
- No equipment
- No gym facility
- Not fun
- Afraid

Can you think of some others? Can you think of ways to overcome these barriers?

EXERCISE AND SAFETY

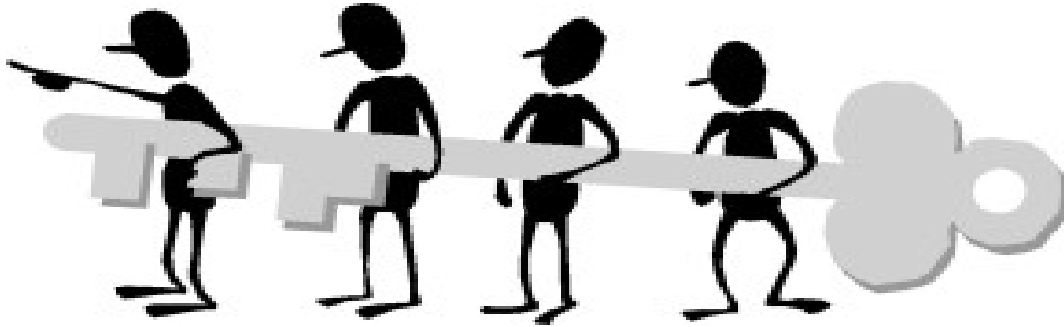
Here are some points to keep in mind about exercise:

- **Warm up before you start an activity or exercise and cool down afterwards.** Stretching or walking helps loosen the muscles and prevent injuries. Do this for about 5-10 minutes before going on to harder exercise.
- **Exercise each day in some way.** Use the stairs instead of elevators. Walk to nearby stores.
- **Start slowly and set a pace that is right for you.** No two people are alike. Remember, only you know how much you can do.

If you use insulin or pills:

- Always check your blood sugar before and after exercise.
- When your blood sugar is less than 100, eat before exercising. (Follow the guidelines given to you by your health care team.)
- To avoid low blood sugar problems, do not exercise or do hard activities when your insulin is at its highest.
- Carry a fast-acting sugar with you when you exercise.
- If you often have low blood sugar reactions with exercise, tell your doctor. It may be wise to exercise with a friend.
- Your diabetes team can give you guidelines for your own exercise program.

MORE TIPS



- Exercise should not make you breathe so hard that you can not talk. It should not cause dizziness or chest pain. If you notice any of these problems while exercising, stop immediately and call your doctor.
- Don't hold your breath during exercise.
- None of the exercises you do should cause pain. The range which you move your arms and legs should never hurt.
- Use safety equipment to prevent injuries. For example, make sure you are wearing comfortable shoes and clothes when you are walking or jogging.
- Take coins with you so you can call for help if you need it. Better yet, bring a friend or relative with you.
- Always wear identification to let others know you have diabetes.
- Always check with your doctor before starting an exercise program. A safe target for your heart rate during exercise is no more than 20 beats per minute above your resting rate.