Physical activity and type 2 diabetes

Physical activity can help you to manage and improve your diabetes.

This handout describes:

- how much physical activity you should do; and
- how physical activity can help your diabetes.

How much physical activity should I do?

To manage and improve your diabetes, try to be active most days of the week.

Both ***aerobic*** and ***resistance*** physical activities can help your diabetes.

- ***Aerobic*** activities work your heart and lungs, such as walking, cycling, jogging, cross-country skiing and swimming.
- ***Resistance*** activities help to strengthen your muscles, such as push-ups, squats, lifting weights and aquatic exercises.

Try to be active most days of the week!

The following table describes your physical activity "prescription" for aerobic activities.

Aerobic Physical Activity	
How often?	Aim for ***150 minutes of aerobic activity per week.*** This could be: • shorter sessions: 10 minutes, 3 times/day • longer sessions: 30 or more minutes/day, 5 or more days/week
How hard?	Try to work at a ***moderate-to-vigorous*** intensity. This means: • your heart beats faster • your body will feel warmer • you may begin to sweat lightly • your breathing is deeper and faster • you can still talk easily, but not sing

What aerobic activities would you like to do?

Aim for 150 minutes of aerobic activities per week!

The following table describes your physical activity "prescription" for resistance activities.

Resistance Physical Activity	
How often?	Try to do resistance activities 2-3 times a week. It is important to do resistance activities for all of your major muscles. Choose a variety at each session, e.g., 6-10 different activities.
How hard?	It is important to work at an intensity level that is ***safe*** for you. For example: • Start by doing one "set" of an exercise or activity. A set should include 10-15 repetitions, such as 10-15 squats. • Over time, you can slowly increase the number of sets that you do for each activity, or slowly increase how much you lift.
Note: A qualified exercise professional can show you what exercises work best for you and how to work at a safe intensity.	

When you begin a new activity, start at your own comfort level.

As you become used to doing the activity, you can slowly increase:

- ***how long*** you are active
- ***how often*** you are active
- ***how many*** activities you do
- ***how hard*** you work

Try to do resistance activities 2-3x/week.

How does physical activity help my diabetes?

Short-term benefit: lower blood sugar levels.

Your blood sugar levels will go down during and after physical activity.

The ***short-term benefits of physical activity last 1-2 days after you are active.*** So, don't wait more than 2 days between your physical activity sessions!

Long-term benefit: your body will use insulin better.

Over time, regular physical activity will increase your body's sensitivity to insulin. This means the sugar in your blood will be used more easily by your body throughout the day.

More benefits

Being physically active on a regular basis may give you many other benefits, such as:

- reducing your need for diabetes medication;
- improving how well your heart works;
- giving you more control over your body weight;
- improving how well you sleep; and
- boosting your energy and strength.

Remember:

- Aerobic and resistance activities can help you manage and improve your diabetes.
- You will see many other benefits from being more active.
- Keep it fun! Make physical activity a lasting part of your life.

What is one thing you can do ***today*** to start being more active?

Funding provided by Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation.

Produced by the Alberta Centre for Active Living, www.centre4activeliving.ca.

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