

# Diabetes: Just the Basics

## Being Active

Physical activity is very important when you have diabetes. It can help control your weight and blood sugar levels and keep your heart healthy. Most people can benefit from walking as their main form of physical activity. When walking, walk as if you are late for a meeting, not just out taking a stroll.

### Benefits of physical activity

- Improves blood sugar and blood pressure
- Lowers “bad” cholesterol (LDL) and triglycerides
- Raises “good” cholesterol (HDL)
- Helps with weight loss and maintenance
- Gives you more energy
- Reduces stress
- Improves mood and sleep



### Before you start

- Talk with your healthcare provider about your plans for increased activity, especially if you have not been active
- Learn how to prevent low blood sugars if you are on a medication that can cause low blood sugar
  - Check your blood sugar before and after physical activity once or twice to make sure it does not drop too low
  - Carry a snack
  - Wear a medical identification bracelet or necklace
- Drink plenty of water
- Wear comfortable shoes and socks



### Getting started

- Look for ways to increase your activity level during a normal day
  - Take the stairs instead of the elevator
  - Park your car farther away from your destination or get off the bus a stop earlier
- Plan for some form of daily activity
- Aim to be active for 30 minutes at least 5 days a week
  - Take 10-minute walks around your home or office, three times a day
  - Buy a pedometer and increase your steps every day. Aim for 10,000 steps a day.

### Steps To Better Health

I can \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (do what) (how long) (how often)

For ex: I can walk after dinner for 30 minutes three times weekly.