

# Why Be Active

Exercising and being active are not just about losing weight. They have many health benefits like lowering cholesterol, improving blood pressure, lowering stress and anxiety, and improving your mood. If you have diabetes, physical activity can also help keep your blood sugar levels closer to your goals and help you keep your diabetes in control.

**Here's how**—Your body stores the sugar you eat in your muscles and in a few other places. The sugar in your muscle stays there until you use it. Once the muscles are “full”, the extra sugar stays in your blood. That is when you may see higher blood sugar (glucose) readings. The more you use your muscles, the more room you make to store sugar and take the extra sugar out of the blood stream where it can cause damage. See, there is a reason to exercise!

It can be difficult to find the time or the motivation to start exercising. Everyone's physical abilities and schedules are different; choose the best ways to fit physical activity into your daily life—whether it's walking to work, doing chair exercises or working out at the gym. The most important things are to **choose activities you enjoy** and to **set goals that are realistic**. We can help you design an activity plan that works for you. Breaking activity into three 10 minute sessions throughout the day is as good as one 30 minute session. This can help you fit exercise into your schedule.



## True or False?

**You are not working out hard enough if you can carry on a conversation.**

**FALSE!** You should be able to talk when doing an activity. If you can't, then your body is working too hard and you need to slow your pace.

Any physical activity is better than none at all. Making physical activity part of your daily lifestyle burns calories. Even if you are inactive and out of shape now, you can improve your health by moving just a little more. Take small steps to add more movement into your daily lifestyle. In time, you will find that you are stronger and able to move even more! You can check your blood sugar before and after physical activity to **learn how your body responds**.

## Make a **FITT** plan for your physical activity

»» **F**requency—How often will you do this activity? Work up to 5 or more days a week.

»» **I**ntensity—How hard should you be working? Remember, you should be able to talk, but not sing during an activity.

»» **T**ime—How long will you do it? Be realistic. Start with 5 or 10 minutes, and work up to 30 minutes.

»» **T**ype of Activity—What will you be doing? Do something you enjoy!

### Here are some tips to get started Get creative!

- »» Take your dog for a walk or play fetch at the park.
- »» Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- »» Call a friend to go dancing or put on your favorite song and make the living room your personal dance floor.
- »» Partner with a friend to find creative ways to be more physically active.
- »» Find a gym buddy to motivate you to stay active.
- »» If you eat lunch with a co-worker, ask him/her to join you for a short walk after you eat.

### Ask yourself

What stops you from doing exercise? *(Circle as many as you want)*

- »» Not enough time
- »» Not motivated
- »» Can't afford it
- »» Too out of shape
- »» Too tired
- »» Other
- »» My \_\_\_\_\_ hurts too much

What's your all-time favorite activity that gets you moving?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some things you can do to get started doing this activity or working up to it?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some other activities that you enjoy doing?

\_\_\_\_\_