**How to get started**

Most guidelines recommend physical activity (including aerobic and/or resistance training) **several times a week for everyone**.

For people with diabetes, physical activity has substantial benefits both in terms of treatment and management. People with type 2 diabetes should accumulate 30-45 minutes a day 3-5 days a week, or **150 minutes a week of aerobic exercise**. Aerobic exercise, such as walking, jogging, swimming, or bike riding, should be intense enough to increase the pulse rate and the respiration rate.

People with diabetes should be encouraged to perform **anaerobic or resistance exercise 3 times a week**. Resistance training does not necessarily require expensive equipment. Weights used can be as simple as a can of soup or a packet of grain. It is better to use repetitive light weights than heavy weights.

The type, frequency, duration and intensity of exercise should be adjusted according to individual fitness levels.

People who have not been recently physically active and are intending to start exercising should see a health care professional in order to identify the best type of physical exercise for them and receive tailored advice.

Together with regular physical activity and a sufficient amount of sleep, a healthy and balanced diet is an essential ingredient for a healthy lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle reduces the risk of developing diabetes. It is also vital for diabetes management and care.
Physical activity has benefits for everyone, with or without diabetes. They include:

- Helping you feel better about yourself
- Helping you beat stress and reduce feelings of depression
- Helping you burn calories and maintain a healthy weight
- Helping to keep blood glucose in the target range
- Increasing insulin sensitivity (the insulin produced works better)
- Keeping joints more mobile and less stiff
- Keeping bones healthy and strong
- Reducing the risks for stroke and heart attack
- Lowering blood pressure
- Improving circulation

Get going every day!

You should aim to do 30 min of physical activity per day 5-days a week or 150 min per week. Remember that you need to stay active throughout the week, as just one or two long and isolated sports session per week are not likely to be as beneficial as regular and daily physical activity.

Incorporate more physical exercise into your daily routine is a great way to get going. No need to become a professional athlete or subscribe to a gym! Here are some simple tips to get active for free:

- Use the stairs
- Walk the dog, walk your kids, just go out for a walk!
- Walk or cycle to and from work
- Get off the bus one or two stops early
- Dance
- Do some gardening
- Do it your way: exercise can be social and fun if you exercise with family and friends or a great way to have time to yourself
- Make it a habit!

What type of physical activity should I choose?

Types of physical activity can be classified into two groups: aerobic and anaerobic.

**Aerobic exercise**

**Aerobic exercises** use large muscle groups that require oxygen for sustained periods. Intensity in aerobic exercises is lower and doesn’t require fast and powerful contractions to produce force. Here are some examples:

- Walking
- Brisk walking
- Running
- Cycling
- Meditative exercises, such as yoga and tai chi, can be called aerobic because aerobic respiration is still the dominant energy system your body uses, even if the intensity is much lower than running

**Anaerobic (or resistance) exercises** use large muscles that do not require oxygen for short periods of exercise. This type of exercise comprises brief periods of physical exertion and high-intensity, strength-training activities. Here are some examples:

- Sprinting
- High-intensity training: weight lifting, push-ups, crunches
- Most athletic sports
- Jumping rope

Many recreational activities, sports and exercises will be both aerobic and anaerobic. Take basketball, football or tennis for example: these sports require both brief surges of high-intensity activity, lasting two minutes or fewer, followed by periods of low-intensity efforts.