

# Diabetes and physical activity



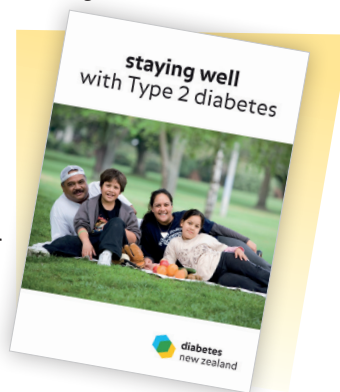
Many people have ups and downs when starting new habits. Use it as a learning experience. Planning goals and working to achieve them is setting a good example for your family, whānau, children and friends.

## What if I'm on insulin or tablets?

If you take insulin or diabetes tablets, learn about 'hypos' or low blood sugars. See the Diabetes NZ pamphlet *Staying well with Type 2 Diabetes*.

When you are physically active you are more prone to having low blood sugar levels. Ask your doctor or diabetes nurse to help you avoid these.

Always carry some glucose tablets and a small snack so that if your blood sugar does go low, you will be able to treat it. Carry some identification stating you have diabetes and what medication you take.



Diabetes New Zealand supports people affected by diabetes and health professionals throughout New Zealand. We act for people affected by diabetes by:

- providing local support
- acting as an advocate
- raising awareness of diabetes, especially interventions that will prevent type 2 diabetes or reduce diabetes complications
- educating and informing people about diabetes, its treatment, management and control
- supporting research into the treatment, prevention and cure of diabetes

To order *Diabetes and physical activity* or any of the other Diabetes New Zealand pamphlets, visit <https://www.diabetes.org.nz/pamphlet-ordering>

**Take the right steps and stay healthy -  
Connect with Diabetes New Zealand:  
Visit [www.diabetes.org.nz](http://www.diabetes.org.nz)**

**Phone 0800 DIABETES (0800 342 238)**

Follow us on social media

**f** @DiabetesNZ **ig** @Diabetes\_\_NZ



Diabetes New Zealand  
PO Box 12441, Wellington 6144



# Diabetes and physical activity



Physical activity is the cornerstone for preventing type 2 diabetes and managing type 1 and type 2 diabetes. If you have diabetes, staying active will help you stay healthy.

You can reduce your chance of getting type 2 diabetes by being physically active.

## How does physical activity help?

Physical activity can help you improve your:

- Blood sugar
- Blood pressure
- Body weight
- Mood

Regular physical activity has been proven to improve your sense of wellbeing. It can help you reduce stress levels and help you sleep better.

## What kind of physical activity is best?

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Brisk walking, swimming, cycling, marae activities, Tai Chi, dancing and mowing the lawns all count.

You can also snack on activity – you don't have to do it all at once. Three brisk walks for 10 minutes in the day may be more manageable than one of 30 minutes.

## How do I get started?

If you are not yet physically active, it's important to start slowly. If you are an older person, or you've had diabetes for more than five years, or you have any existing diabetes complications visit your doctor before you start.

Your doctor will discuss the benefits of being physically active with you.

Check with your doctor/diabetes nurse for activity support in your area.

Whatever activity you choose:

- Set a small goal each day that you can achieve.
- Increase your goal every few days so you are building your activity level.

Seek medical help if you have any pain, dizziness or shortness of breath when you are active. These symptoms can be a warning that something may be wrong.

## How do I stick to regular physical activity?

- Find something you enjoy that fits with your lifestyle. Many people prefer activities with a purpose, such as walking to work, walking the dog or gardening.
- Plan your activity at a time that works for you.
- Combine your activity with something else you enjoy such as aerobics, kapa haka, a dance class or walking with your co-workers at lunchtime or your family and whānau or friends in the weekend. Or you may prefer some active time alone.
- Remember your goal of increasing physical activity. Use every opportunity, every time - use the stairs instead of the lift, walk briskly to the shop, or walk the kids to school.

