



# Diabetes and Physical Activity

## Your Exercise Prescription

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**As your healthcare provider, I recommend that you follow the physical activity prescription ticked below (choose all that apply):**

- 1. **Increase physical activity in your day and reduce sedentary time.** Limit sedentary recreational time to no more than 2 hours per day.
- 2. **Begin regular aerobic exercise\*** 4 days per week for 10 minutes per session.
- 3. **Begin resistance exercise\*\*** 2 days per week.
- 4. **Continue to do regular aerobic exercise\*** 5 days per week for a minimum of 30 minutes per session.
- 5. **Continue to do regular resistance exercise\*\*** 3 or more days per week.

*\*Aerobic exercise is continuous, whole body exercise that elevates breathing and heart rate.*

*\*\*Resistance exercise involves doing various body movements with strong contractions to build muscle strength.*

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do to manage and live well with your diabetes. Many people, however, need help starting an exercise routine and achieving these goals.

The benefits of physical activity increase the more you do, from whatever your starting point. **Refer to the information on the back of this form to help you get started with your physical activity prescription.** If you need help, you can ask me or another member of your diabetes healthcare team for support that is right for you.

### Physical activity and building strength in your major muscle groups can provide you with these benefits:

#### Immediately

- Lower your blood glucose within 1 hour
- Improve your mood, sleep patterns and energy level
- Increase the effectiveness of the insulin your body makes or the insulin your doctor prescribes for you

#### Long-term

- Improve your blood glucose control
- Reduce your body fat
- Help keep your pancreas, kidneys, eyes and nerves healthy
- Reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke and death

The Canadian Diabetes Association 2008 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Diabetes in Canada recommends that all people with diabetes:

**Get a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity aerobic exercise each week, and perform resistance training (weight lifting or exercise with weight machines) 3 times per week.**

You can be physically active. Becoming physically active may seem challenging, but it is easier than you might think. This information will help you get started with your physical activity prescription.

1. **Increase physical activity in your day and reduce sedentary time.** Choose active options when you can, such as taking the stairs. Include more activities that you may already do, such as walking the dog, gardening, curling or playing golf. Limit TV or recreational computer use to no more than 2 hours per day and reduce or break up the time you spend sitting.
2. **Begin regular aerobic exercise.** At least every second day, do activities like brisk walking, cycling or swimming, for at least 10 minutes at a time. Each week, add 5 minutes to every activity session you do.
3. **Begin regular resistance exercise.** With the help of a qualified exercise professional, diabetes educator or exercise resource (such as a video or brochure) learn how to do a muscle strength building routine using weight machines, free weights (such as lifting a barbell or dumbbell), resistance bands or your own body weight. You will need to work most of the muscles in your body with 8 to 10 different exercises. Do each exercise 10 to 15 times each at a light to moderate intensity. Repeat this routine if you can.
4. **Continue to do regular aerobic exercise.** Do at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity every week, spread over 3 separate days. Don't go for more than 2 days in a row without exercise. For example, 30 minutes Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday = 150 minutes total. Gradually increase the time of your activity sessions up to 60 minutes or more. Also, try to increase the intensity or challenge of your activities. More challenging activities could be hiking, sports, jogging or swimming laps.
5. **Continue to do regular resistance exercise.** Continue using weight machines or free weights (such as lifting a barbell or dumbbell). You will need to work most of the muscles in your body with 8 to 10 different exercises, done 8 to 10 times each at a moderate to hard intensity. Repeat this routine 2 to 3 times.

For more information on physical activity and exercise, go to [diabetes.ca/physicalactivityconsumers](https://diabetes.ca/physicalactivityconsumers).

[diabetes.ca](https://diabetes.ca) | 1-800-BANTING (226-8464)

