**Move more to manage diabetes**

Diabetes is a chronic condition characterised by high levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood. If left uncontrolled, it can lead to life-threatening complications including kidney damage, cardiovascular disease and an increased risk of infections[[1]](#footnote-1).

*Did you know that Nordic countries – such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark – are often recognised for their high levels of physical activity and active lifestyles?*

They also have some of the lowest rates of diabetes globally (~6%)[[2]](#footnote-2). This is because there is a significant link between physical activity and diabetes, particularly Type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is the more common type and the one associated with poor lifestyle factors such as an unhealthy diet, sedentary lifestyle and obesity.

**Exercise. Exercise. Exercise.**

Exercise is good for (just about) everyone. But it’s particularly beneficial for people living with diabetes. Jonathan Kibble, Physical Activity Specialist for Vitality UK says that being active makes your body more sensitive to insulin, which helps manage your diabetes. “Physical activity also helps control blood sugar levels and lowers your risk of heart disease and nerve damage.” he adds.

**Looking for more reasons to get moving?**

There are so many other perks to exercise like maintaining a healthy weight, sleeping better, feeling happier, controlling your blood pressure and even improving your memory.

**Where to start**

The American Diabetes Association recommends that adults with diabetes prioritise both aerobic activity and strength training[[3]](#footnote-3). The goal is to get up and get moving with at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week (which is just 25 minutes day!) and to include a couple of strength training activities in-between.

“Choose to go for a brisk walk, mow the lawn or do some housework. You can also dance, swim or cycle your way to better diabetes management. If lifting weights is your thing, great. Include strength training activities into your weekly routine with dumbbells, medicine balls, resistance bands or even just using your own body weight,” says Kibble.

**Your checklist**

But, hold on! Before you get going it’s important for those living with diabetes to take note of these 5 things:

1. Check with your doctor before you start any exercise plan.
2. Measure your blood sugar before and after exercise, especially if you take insulin.
3. Carry carbs with you in case your blood sugar gets low and hydrate often.
4. Wear cotton socks and athletic shoes that fit well and are comfortable.
5. Check your feet after exercise for sores, blisters, irritation, cuts or other injuries.

**Don’t forget your Vitality points**

Remember to complete your annual Vitality Health Check – a simple and convenient set of essential health screenings and preventative tests – for a healthier, happier you. Plus, you’ll earn Vitality points to move you up in reward status.

1. National Library of Medicin3. Epidemiology of Diabetes and Diabetes-related Complications. [Link](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3870323/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ScienceDirect. Global estkmates of diabetes prevalence for 2013 and projections for 2035. [Link](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0168822713003859) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. American Diabetes Association. Fitness. [Link](https://diabetes.org/healthy-living/fitness) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)