

**HEALTHY
LIFESTYLE
INFORMATION**



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

REDUCING YOUR RISK OF TYPE 2 DIABETES

Being physically active is good for all of us and can help to reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes. This information sheet is a starting point to help you think about how you can become more active. If you have any concerns at all about becoming more active, never be afraid to ask for advice.

Activity made easier

Being more physically active often conjures up images of gym memberships, long distance runs and aerobics in a leotard, yet this need not be the case. The great news is that you can become more active by making small changes to your lifestyle.

What counts as activity?

Every form of physical activity counts. The recommended minimum amount of activity for adults is 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity on at least five days of the week in bouts of 10 minutes or more. That's only 2.5 hours out of a 168 hour week.

Why is keeping active important to you?

Many people enjoy being active not just for their health but because it makes them feel better and helps stop their weight creeping up. You may want to ask yourself what being more active means to you. Some people say it makes them more mobile, less out of breath, less stressed and helps them sleep better.

And for your health? Well, there are a number of health benefits to keeping physically active. It will:

- reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes, stroke or heart attack
- help lower blood pressure
- improve your cholesterol levels
- strengthen your bones.

So what's stopping you?

It can be useful to consider what may get in the way of you being more active. Some people may say that, they don't have the time, that they are too tired or can't afford it. There is lots of help and ways to get around these barriers – your healthcare team could discuss some options with you.

Activities to get you started

There are lots of ways to include more walking in your everyday life. Instead of meeting friends or family for a coffee why not suggest a walk or a trip to the shops? Beat the traffic and leave the car at home for small trips or get off the bus or train one or two stops earlier and walk the rest of the way. Helping out with a friend's dog-walking is another way to notch up the steps too.

Try dancing, swimming, golf, cycling, bowling or gardening. Or, enjoy some fun with the children and join in with their activities, such as kicking a ball around the park – or what about rollerblading? The list is endless.

Even those essential jobs around the house like Hoovering, gardening and DIY will help. It all counts.

Top tips for being active

- 1** Build up gradually. If you have been inactive for a number of years your body may take time to adjust as your heart and muscles tone up.
- 2** Set yourself daily, weekly and monthly goals or targets.
- 3** Try keeping a physical activity diary to monitor your progress and reward yourself for achieving your goals.
- 4** Try varying your activity to avoid boredom setting in and don't be afraid to try new activities.
- 5** Don't give up. Although your body benefits as soon as you become more active you may not see visible changes straight away. After a few weeks the benefits will become more noticeable to you.
- 6** Regular habits included in your daily routine are easier to achieve.
- 7** If you find an activity you enjoy, you are more likely to keep it up. Better still, try taking up an activity the whole family or your friends can enjoy.

For support and information about diabetes please call Diabetes UK Careline: 0845 120 2960 (charged at local rate). A translation service is available. Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

If you would like to feedback on this or any of our other healthcare information, please email: infofeedback@diabetes.org.uk