



# Diabetes and Exercise

The effect of exercise on blood glucose is similar to that of insulin. Like insulin, exercise lowers blood glucose and helps your body to be more sensitive to insulin. However, this can cause problems if your blood glucose is not closely monitored and it drops too low while exercising.

Exercise can cause some of the same effects as low blood glucose, such as sweating and rapid heart beat.

**If you think your blood glucose levels are low or you feel sick, check your blood glucose right away  
If your blood glucose is below 70:**

- Take 15 grams of quick acting carbohydrates right away.
- Wait 15 minutes.
- Recheck your blood sugar. If it is still below 70, repeat step one.

Because exercise can cause blood sugar to decrease, eat a snack before exercising if your blood sugar is below 100. Examples of a pre-exercise snack:

- Apple with peanut butter
- Fruit and cottage cheese
- One-half of a sandwich with four ounces of juice

## How does exercise help my diabetes and my health?

Whenever you move, your muscles burn blood glucose for fuel. The more you move the more glucose you burn! That means better blood glucose control for most people and better health for everyone.



## Benefits of exercise:

- Increased energy and strength
- Lowered cholesterol
- Improved circulation
- Better managed weight
- Strengthened muscles, bones and joints
- Decreased stress
- Improved posture, balance and independent living
- Improved well-being
- Better sleep

## When you don't exercise it can lead to:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Osteoporosis
- Depression
- Obesity
- Colon cancer
- Stroke
- Poor circulation
- Insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes

# Diabetes and Stress

Learning to cope with stress in a healthy way is an important part of diabetes management. One of the first steps to reducing stress is to identify the stressor. Then, list the parts of the stressor you can control and learn to accept what you cannot.



Stressors tend to make your body move faster and tense up. This is called the “fight-or-flight” response. Stress also releases stress hormones that raise your blood sugar.

### Too much stress in your life can effect:

- Your body
- Your mind
- Your spirit

### Stress can effect your diabetes in the following ways:

- Increase in blood sugar
- Drop in blood sugar
- Production of ketones
- Muscle aches
- diarrhea
- tiredness
- shortness of breath
- headaches

### Stress can also have an indirect effect on your diabetes by causing unhealthy habits such as:

- Irritability, anxiety, anger, depression or low self-esteem
- Turning to alcohol, smoking, drugs, over-eating or over-spending

Some of the above unhealthy habits might be a way to distract yourself from your problems. However, all of these changes are bad for diabetes control and could bring about even more stress.

### What strategies can ease stress on my body?

- Deep breathing exercises
- Relaxation training
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Massage

