

## EXERCISE SAFETY TIPS

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For people with diabetes, one of the most important things to learn about being active is how to do it safely. Exercising safely will ensure you maintain your activity routine and enjoy the benefits of activity each day.

There are steps everyone should take to keep exercise safe.

*“Everyone needs to sort of design and develop their own program that takes their special needs into consideration. Not everyone can do all forms of exercise.”*

For example, if you have eye disease such as retinopathy, weight training may not be the right activity choice for you. To find out if you have any health problems that may get in the way of exercising safely, meet with your healthcare provider first and talk about your concerns. He can help you find an activity you can do safely.

Once you’ve chosen your exercise plan, remember – any increased activity can be hard on your feet and skin. So, regularly examine your skin and feet for blisters, red spots, cuts or bruises.

You can keep foot problems to a minimum by wearing comfortable, well-fitting shoes that are designed for your exercise activity.

Wear good, seamless socks that absorb moisture and keep your feet dry. And always put on clean, dry socks after you exercise.

Choose comfortable clothes when you exercise. Drink plenty of water, especially when you are outdoors and the weather is very warm. Exercise indoors when the weather is extremely hot, cold, humid, or the air quality is poor.

*“During the course of my workout, how do I know if I’m working hard enough, or even too hard?”*

To ensure you are working out hard enough to get the benefits of physical activity, but not so hard that you may be unsafe, check your intensity level throughout your exercise session.

One way to do this is with the Borg Scale which is a Perceived Level of Exertion Scale that monitors how hard you exercise. It rates how your body feels during exercise on a scale of six to twenty. Six indicates you are working too lightly, and twenty indicates that you are working too hard.

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Some people use a modified version of the Borg Scale, called the Talk Test. It measures how short of breath you are at any given time.

If you can sing while you are exercising, you are working out at a light intensity. If you can carry on a conversation comfortably, you are working out at a moderate intensity. When you become too winded to carry on a conversation, you are working out at a vigorous intensity.

Monitoring your target heart rate is another guideline for exercising. Since everyone's endurance level is different, work with your diabetes care team to find the safest target heart rate for you.

Exercise is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your diabetes. But doing it safely is key to maintaining your good health, and getting all the benefits you can from exercise.