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Safe Exercise for Patients with Diabetes



Exercise is as important for those with diabetes as it is for anyone else. The goal of most exercise regimens should be to work out at a moderate intensity for 30 minutes at least five days a week.

Patients with diabetes, however, need to take several exercise-related precautions:

- **If you already have problems with your leg or foot nerves, choose exercises that will stress them as little as possible** such as biking, swimming, rowing or even chair exercises.

- **If you do not have foot problems, take preventive measures.** Choose athletic shoes that fit well and are not too tight, and wear comfortable cotton socks. After your workouts, visually check your feet carefully for any cuts, blisters, sores or minor irritations. Because people with diabetes can be less sensitive than others to foot pain, you need to do this so you can treat any irregularity at its inception, before it develops into something difficult to heal.
- **Avoid working with heavy weights if you have high blood pressure or diabetes-related blood vessel or eye complications.**
- **Track your blood sugar before, during and after exercise.** To avoid possibly damaging blood sugar swings, you need to learn how your body responds to exercise. Work with your physician to determine specific guidelines for you to follow.
- **Prepare for any incidence of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) while you are exercising—as at any other time—by always having a source of 15 grams of fast-acting carbohydrates on hand.** The most portable include two tablespoons of raisins, five pieces of hard candy or three five-gram glucose tablets. Consider having a second helping available, in case you still do not feel better 15 minutes after taking the first.
- **Stay hydrated by drinking lots of fluids before, during and after exercise, as well.**

If you have diabetes, see us for an individualized program that will take into account your current fitness level and fitness goals. Such a regimen will help maintain your blood sugar levels, increase your strength and range of motion, flexibility, gait, balance, posture, joint mobility and soft-tissue tightness, to reduce the risk of falling and the injuries caused by those falls.