

# Exercising safely with diabetes

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(HealthDay)—Exercise is a powerful tool for managing diabetes.

Doing it safely can be a bit of a challenge, but the extra effort is worth it. Regular exercise has been shown to lower blood sugar levels. Working out uses sugar from your bloodstream to fuel your muscles. It also helps the insulin in your body to work better, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Talk to your doctor about which activities are safe for you, what your blood sugar readings should be prior to working out, and what to look for when you test your blood sugar during as well as after exercise.

You'll likely be told to always test your blood sugar before working out. If it's too high to exercise safely, wait until it's back under control. If it's too low, eat a small snack to help prevent hypoglycemia—dangerously [low blood sugar](#), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends.

During your workout, you should be prepared to test your blood sugar (glucose) again, especially if you feel any symptoms of hypoglycemia, such as shakiness, confusion, or fatigue. Carry hard candy, a box of raisins, or glucose tabs in case you need fast-acting carbs to counteract low blood sugar. This is more of a possibility if you're on insulin.

If you need the snack, stop exercising, wait 15 to 20 minutes, and then check your blood [sugar](#) again before resuming exercise, the American Diabetes Association suggests. Separately, remember to drink water while you work out since dehydration can affect your [blood sugar level](#).

Test yourself after your workouts to see what impact the activity has had on your [blood sugar](#). Understanding your pattern can help you avoid dangerous highs and lows.

**More information:** The Joslin Diabetes Center has more about [blood glucose readings](#) before, during, and after exercise.

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