

Exercise is a lifestyle habit that lowers your risk of diabetes and heart disease by:

- Lowering the fats in your blood like triglycerides
- Lowering your blood pressure
- Increasing your body’s cells ability to use insulin
- Improving the fitness of your heart and lungs
- Burning **body fat**, even if you don’t lose **pounds**

Frequent or daily exercise can help lower the triglycerides in your blood. Higher amounts of exercise *may* also help lower LDL-C, the bad cholesterol, in your blood. Exercise may help you maintain a healthy weight.

How much exercise? For weight loss: Try to do moderate-level exercise at least 150 minutes a week, or 30–60 minutes a day, for modest weight loss. You may need to exercise 200–300 minutes a week to lose more weight.

For weight maintenance: If you have lost excess weight, you may need to do 150 minutes to more than 300 minutes a week of moderate-level exercise to help maintain weight loss.

What is moderate-level exercise?



An effort scale from 1 to 10 is one way to know if you are exercising at a moderate level. A 1 or 2 on the scale is very light effort like an easy walk. An 8 or 9 is very hard like hiking a steep hill. Exercising at a moderate-level means that your effort feels

between 4 and 6 on the 10-point scale.

What kind of exercise?

Your body and health will benefit from any kind of physical activity. But **aerobic exercise** makes you breathe harder and uses large muscle groups. When you **walk, hike, walk-jog, bike, swim, dance, and row**, you are doing aerobic exercise. This is often the best way to improve your triglycerides and help you lose weight.

Strength training exercises can help improve your strength, balance, and bone density.

Helpful Tips for Starting an Exercise Program for Weight Loss



Buy a pedometer that does not cost a lot of money (no more than \$20). Use it to track your total daily physical activity. Good pedometers should be well made (not the \$1.98 variety) and have large, visible displays.

Start by adding 20,000 of pedometer counts (steps) each week to the activity you already do. Walking 20,000 steps each week is about 8–10 miles. A good start would be to add 3,000 steps each day to your current activity. Each week, try to add more steps each day, until you are walking 10,000 steps on 5 or more days a week. If you are trying to lose weight, try to walk 12,000 steps a day. See the table for a sample program.

Try to not “out eat” your exercise. It is easy to think you can eat more calories when you are more active. But weight loss happens when you burn *more* calories than you eat. If you are overweight, the best way to lose body fat and lower your triglycerides is by reducing your total daily calories **and** exercising more.

More information for patients—American College of Sports Medicine’s Complete Guide to Fitness & Health. Human Kinetics Publishers

More information for clinicians—Visit www.exerciseismedicine.org and choose “HCP Tools”

The 200-Minute per Week Exercise for Weight Loss Program

Monday	One 20 minute walk or Five 4-minute walks at work
Wednesday	One 20 minute walk or Five 4-minute walks at work
Friday	One 20 minute walk or Five 4-minute walks at work
1 Weekend Day	2-hour variable walk-hike (with hills or rolling inclines)
Total Time and Energy Burned*	180–200 minutes and 1,500–2000+ kcal burned (20,000 added pedometer steps)*

*Think: about 100–120 or more calories are burned per 1 mile walked. Heavier people will burn more calories per mile. Also, estimate about 2,000 steps per mile.