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# Diabetes Life Lines



A newsletter from your County Extension Office  
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## Diabetes Newsletter – Choosing the Right Exercises and Exercise Equipment

You already know that to manage your diabetes, exercise is crucial. Along with diet and medicine, exercise can help reduce diabetic complications. The greatest benefits of exercise are:

- help your body use insulin better;
- lowering blood glucose and A1c levels;
- making your heart stronger;
- improving circulation;
- decreasing LDL or “bad” cholesterol;

- increasing HDL or “good” cholesterol;
- lowering blood pressure;
- and giving you more energy.

You can enjoy a variety of activities ranging from water aerobics, walking around the block, and playing with your children to rock climbing, playing football, and running marathons. No single exercise plan works for everyone, so you must find the activities you will enjoy and really do. Before starting, talk to your doctor to find out what exercises will work best for your skills and needs. Many people begin with both aerobic and resistance training.

For aerobic exercise, you have many options. If you like to be outside, enjoy a brisk walk around your neighborhood or a short hike in a public park. If you prefer to be inside, the recumbent bike, elliptical trainer, or treadmill may be a better choice. If you feel you cannot get a decent workout on your own, a step aerobics or cycling class may be best for you. Other aerobic exercises include water aerobics, dancing, and tennis.

If you have numbness in your feet, avoid exercises that increase your risk for cuts, blisters and sores, such as jogging and long hikes, and

replace them with low-impact exercises like swimming and cycling.

For resistance training, different types of equipment have unique benefits. If you are just starting out or want to exercise at home, try a resistance band.

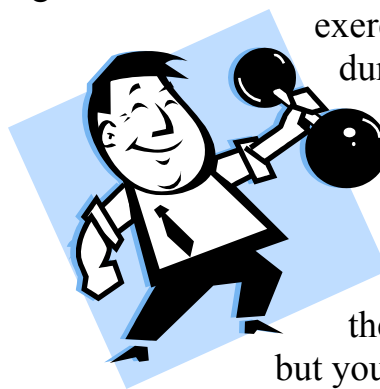
Resistance bands are long, plastic tubes with handles at each end that come in a variety of colors. Each color indicates a different level of resistance. Many types of exercises that work different muscle groups can be performed with the bands. Some of the easiest exercises are bicep curls, side shoulder raises, and tricep extensions. Resistance bands are inexpensive, light, and easy to transport. You can anchor them with your feet, a door, or another person.

Bicep Curls – with one hand on each handle, stand on the center of the band with both feet securely anchoring it to the ground. Your arms should be by your sides, palms out. Slowly bring your hands up from your sides to your shoulders bending at the elbows. Slowly bring your hands back down. Repeat 12 times.

Side Shoulder Raises - with one hand on each handle, stand on the center of the band with both feet securely anchoring it to the ground. Your arms should be by your sides, palms in. With your arms slightly bent, slowly raise them outward from your sides until they are at shoulder height. Slowly lower your arms back down. Repeat 12 times.

Tricep Extensions - with one hand on each handle, stand on the center of the band with both feet securely anchoring it to the ground. Bend over at the waist. With your arms bent and your elbows locked by your sides, slowly extend your arms back until they are straight. Slowly return your arms to the bent position. Repeat 12 times.

If you join a gym, start out with weight machines. Machines show you which muscles you are working, and provide instruction, so you will exercise with proper form. Once you get used to the machines, add some



exercises with dumbbells as well. With dumbbells, you do the same exercises as the machines, but you need more stability and balance. You can also do push-ups and sit-ups at the gym or at home.

If you need help to get started or to stay on track, hire a personal trainer. A personal trainer can help you do the exercises properly, chart your progress, and keep you motivated and on a set schedule

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## Are You In Charge?

You are the captain of your medical team. But what does that mean? Basically you are the one who should be making the decisions about managing your diabetes. Psychologists call this “empowerment.” Using this power can feel great, but it is not easy. While you’ll deserve credit for your successes, you will also have to live with your missteps.

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To help make better decisions, the American Diabetes Association recommends that you:

- Work closely with your medical team to learn all you can about diabetes and what treatments work for you. Everyone is different and only you can figure out what treatment fits your lifestyle.
- Keep learning about diabetes even if you've had diabetes for a while. New treatments appear often. Read diabetes books, magazines and newsletters to keep up.
- Set your own goals. You may want short and long-term goals. For example, your goal today may be to walk 15 minutes, but your goal for the month may be to work-up to a 30-minute walk.
- Tell your health care provider what your goals are. Negotiate if their goals for you are different. Honestly tell them if a treatment plan won't work for you.
- Plan ahead what you want to focus on at your medical check-up. Write down your questions with the most important ones first. Take the



list to your visit. Tell your medical team you need time to ask some questions. For example, you may want to discuss the side effects of your medicine, whether you should try an herbal supplement or how diabetes is affecting your emotions.

- Take a list of all your medicines (even those that are not prescription) to every visit or take them with you in a bag. Be sure the doctor or nurse looks at them and has them written in your chart.
- Remove shoes and socks during the visit so your feet can be checked.
- Answer all questions fully and truthfully. If you don't give the medical team the real picture, it will not hurt them, but it could hurt you.
- Repeat back any instructions that they give you in your own words. Then you will be sure you understand **before** you leave.
- Check back with the medical team if they don't call when you have tests done. Don't assume no news is good news. Ask what the results mean.
- Don't skip check-ups and screenings. Catching problems early is always best and will save you time and money.

- Ask others for support. Tell your family and friends exactly how they can help you. Confide in those you trust. Join a diabetes support group.
- Keep good records about your diabetes care in a logbook or on a computer. Then you can see patterns and make changes to keep your diabetes in control.
- Use reminders. Sticky notes, timers, medicine containers that hold doses for each day can help. Keep your monitor in plain sight so you will check on time.
- Find out what will keep you motivated. You may need little rewards when you achieve your goals. You may decide to take care of yourself for your family's sake or so you can stay independent. You will handle the challenges better if you have a good reason to take care of yourself.

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## What to Do About Neuropathy?

Diabetic neuropathy (nerve damage) can be tough to diagnose and treat. It can affect the nerves in your hands and feet or the nerves to your internal organs. All people with Type 2 diabetes need to be screened for neuropathy when they are first diagnosed and then annually. For

those who have Type 1 diabetes, yearly screening typically begins five years after diagnosis.

Screening usually includes checking your blood pressure, heart rate, muscle strength, reflexes and how sensitive you are to changes in position, temperature, vibration or light touch. The doctor will pay special attention to your feet because people often do not know they have neuropathy there. If you do not know you have nerve damage, you may not notice a foot injury that could lead to an amputation.

While some people report pain from neuropathy in their hands and feet that is burning, “electrical” or stabbing, others have no pain at all or numbness. Frequently other causes of neuropathy like B<sub>12</sub> deficiency have to be ruled out before a treatment can begin. ***If diabetes is the cause, getting blood glucose in control and keeping it stable is most important.***

Treatment depends on what part of your body is being affected by neuropathy. For example, you may be treated with medicines for impotence, bulking agents for constipation or drugs called beta blockers for heart problems.

For treating pain, two drugs, duloxetine and gabapentin, are



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approved by the FDA. Gabapentin is used more often. Some anti-



depressants taken at bedtime also seem to relieve pain. Sometimes stronger pain medications are needed or a referral

to a pain management clinic. Some people also have found hypnosis, acupuncture, biofeedback and relaxation training helps. Surprisingly walking regularly also may reduce pain in the legs and feet.

Here is a list of possible neuropathy symptoms. Report them to your medical team if you have them.

- Pain, burning, numbness or weakness in your feet.
- Feeling very hot or cold in your feet or hands.
- Very dry skin on your feet.
- Changes in the muscles and bones in your feet.
- Having an open sore on your feet or legs, especially if it heals slowly.
- Heartburn, nausea, bloating or vomiting after eating, particularly if you have not eaten much.
- Unpredictable blood glucose levels after meals.
- Constipation or diarrhea.
- Poor bladder control and/or frequent bladder infections.

- Impotence for men or problems with feeling aroused and having an orgasm for women.
  - Vaginal dryness.
  - Dizziness or fainting when changing position quickly.
  - Racing heart while resting.
  - Too little or too much sweating.
  - Not being able to tell when your blood glucose is going low.
  - Poor vision when driving at night or when you enter a bright area after being in a darker one.
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## Recipe Corner

### Black Beans and Rice with Tomatoes

- 1 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes (use unsalted to cut sodium)
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 cup instant whole-grain brown rice
- 1 15-oz. can black beans, drained and rinsed with water for one minute
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese made with 2% milk
- 4 tablespoons fat-free sour cream
- 4 tablespoons taco sauce

Combine canned tomatoes and water in medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add rice and stir to combine. Reduce heat to low and cover tightly. Cook for about 8-10 minutes. While rice is cooking, drain and rinse black beans. Heat beans in microwave for 1 minute. Combine tomatoes, rice, and beans thoroughly and divide into 4 portions. Top each portion with 1/8 cup cheddar cheese, 1 tablespoon sour cream and 1 tablespoon taco sauce.

*Makes 4 servings*

Nutrient Analysis, per serving:

Calories 253    Carbohydrate: 40 grams    Fat: 4 grams    Fiber: 8 grams

Protein: 13 grams    Cholesterol: 10 milligrams    Sodium: 769 milligrams, *draining and rinsing the beans will decrease the amount of sodium*

*Exchanges: 1 very lean meat, 2 starches, and 2 non-starchy vegetables*

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### Suggested Menu

<b>Menu Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Exchanges</b>	<b>Carbohydrates</b>
Grilled Chicken Breast	3 ounces	3 very lean meats	0 grams
Black Beans and Rice with Tomatoes	<i>1 serving</i>	<i>1 very lean mean 2 starches 2 vegetables</i>	40 grams
Steamed Broccoli	1/2 cup	1 vegetable	5 grams
Hot tea		Free	0
Artificial sweetener		Free	0

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**The University of Georgia**

## **Cooperative Extension**

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Dear Friend,

*Diabetes Life Lines* is a bi-monthly publication sent to you by your local county Extension agent.

It is written by Food and Nutrition Specialists at the University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences. This newsletter brings you the latest information on diabetes, nutrition, the diabetic exchange system, recipes, and important events.

If you would like more information, please contact your local county Extension office.

Yours truly,

County Extension Agent

Connie Crawley, Principal Writer

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Scott Angle, Dean and Director

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