GUIDE ONE
OF FIVE

01

WHY SHOULD I EXERCISE?

EXTOD

EXTOD Exercise Confidence Guides

Exercise is one of the most powerful things you can do for your health with Type 1 diabetes.

Why is exercise so important?

Regular physical activity can improve almost every aspect of living with Type 1 diabetes. It doesn't cure diabetes, but it helps you live better with it. Walking, gardening, swimming, cycling, dancing and everyday movement all count.

Anyone can start to do exercise no matter how fit they are.

One of the biggest myths about exercise is that you need to be fit before you start. You don't. You simply need to begin. Every movement counts. Walking. Gardening. Dancing. Swimming. Playing with the grandchildren. It all counts.

Confidence comes before fitness.

The aim isn't to become the fastest or fittest. The aim is to become confident enough to enjoy being active without fear. That's what these guides are all about.

How much exercise should I be doing?

Adults should aim to be active every day. Adults should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity (e.g., brisk walking) or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (e.g., running) weekly, plus muscle-strengthening exercises on at least two days.

I'm worried exercise will make my blood glucose go low.

If you've ever thought that, you're not alone.

Many people living with Type 1 diabetes avoid exercise because they're worried about hypos, unexpected highs or simply not knowing what might happen.

Exercise isn't the problem. Understanding exercise is the solution. These guides will help you build that understanding.

Research from the University of Exeter, in partnership with Breakthrough T1D and EXTOD, reveals:

53%

of adults fear low blood glucose during exercise.

The benefits of becoming more active



Healthier heart

Exercise strengthens your heart and lungs and reduces your risk of heart disease.



Better mental wellbeing

Exercise is a proven way to improve mood, reduce stress and increase confidence.



Better long-term health

An active lifestyle can help reduce the risk of many diabetes-related complications later in life.



Better insulin sensitivity

Your body often becomes more sensitive to insulin, meaning it can work more effectively.



More energy for everyday life

Whether it's playing with your children, walking the dog or climbing stairs, exercise can help everyday activities feel easier.



Greater confidence and independence

Learning how your body responds to exercise helps you become less fearful, more confident and more able to enjoy an active life.



Better blood glucose management

As you learn how your body responds to exercise, you can often spend more time in your target range.



Better sleep

Many people find they sleep more deeply and wake feeling more refreshed.



Stronger muscles and bones

Regular activity helps maintain muscle strength and healthy bones, helping you stay stronger and more independent as you age.

Remember...

Every single person with Type 1 diabetes is different. There isn't one perfect way to exercise. The goal is to discover what works for YOU. These guides will help you do that.

Your EXTOD Guides challenge 1

Take your first step. This week, think about why you want to become more active. Now write down your reason. Maybe it's to have more energy, feel healthier, improve your blood glucose management, enjoy more active family time, more time outdoors, or simply prove to yourself that you can.

Then choose one activity you'd like to try over the coming weeks. It doesn't have to be big, it just has to be something you'll enjoy.

Remember. Confidence doesn't come before you start. It grows every time you take another step.

Your EXTOD Guides

- ☐ **01** Why should I exercise?
- ☐ **02** How exercise affects my blood glucose
- ☐ **03** How do I start exercising?
- ☐ **04** What is the ICE approach?
- ☐ **05** Make exercise work for you

Scan here to continue your journey

Visit the EXTOD website to explore more resources and continue learning.

extod.org

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Top tips from T1s

"I encourage my daughter with T1D by making exercise about fun, not diabetes."

"Don't wait until you feel ready. Just get started."

"Exercise doesn't have to be a lot or extreme. A 10-minute walk is still exercise. Far better than nothing."

"I wish I'd started exercising years earlier. It wasn't nearly as frightening as I'd imagined."

"Take little steps, and celebrate little wins. No one said it's easy but nothing worth doing is."

"Don't compare yourself to anyone else. Your journey with Type 1 diabetes is uniquely yours."

Your next step: Guide 2 – How exercise affects my blood glucose

One of the biggest surprises for people with Type 1 diabetes is discovering that not all exercise affects blood glucose in the same way. Why do some types of exercise make your blood glucose go up, and some make your glucose levels go down? Understanding this is one of the biggest steps towards exercising with confidence.