

How to start and sustain a regular physical activity routine

A regular physical activity routine is critical for preventing type 2 diabetes and controlling blood sugar among persons living with type 2 diabetes. This requires committing time and resources to start and sustain physical activity.

A regular physical activity routine depends on the following factors;

- Health status: persons with health conditions that impair their ability to move around may not be able to carry out physical activity. Health conditions that affect heart beat may also impair the capacity of affected persons to exercise.
- Disability: persons with disabilities that limit their ability to move around may also find it difficult to carry out physical activity.
- Lifestyle: persons with a very busy lifestyle and schedule may find it difficult to carry out physical activity
- Place of residence: persons residing in areas with poor road infrastructures and recreational spaces may find it difficult to exercise.
- Occupation: persons who work in places where they must sit for a long period of time may find it difficult to exercise.

These factors can be overcome with careful planning. This requires taking into consideration the factors that limit the capacity to exercise and then find ways of overcoming them.

These are some suggestions:

- Health status: discuss with a doctor before commencing a physical activity routine and start with low intensity exercises.
- Disability: Work with a doctor and a physical activity trainer to identify physical activities that are feasible with the type of disability. For instance, persons who use a wheelchair can carry out upper body exercises while sitting.
- Lifestyle: reflect on daily routine and explore ways to integrate physical activity into daily routine. For example, use the staircase instead of a lift.
- Place of residence: consider physical activities that can be conducted at home and will require limited space. For example walking in place, jumping rope etc
- Occupation: This can be overcome by walking a few distance before taking a means of transport to work, walking to visit offices of colleagues instead of using the phone etc

Developing a physical activity action plan

Like every action plan, consider the what type of physical activity, when, duration and place.

What type of physical activity: Ensure that your plan includes the various types of physical activity based on your preference.

When: Identify a time during the day that is most convenient for this activity. It may be mornings, afternoons, and evening.

Duration: Reflect on how long to devote to physical activity each day

Intensity: The force applied in doing the exercise. Start slow and adjust until you get used to it. For instance, on your first day, start with a slow casual work, do this for several days until you get used to it, then start brisk walking.

Place: identify a convenient place for this physical activity. It might be at home, office, outside the house, gymnasium etc.

Weather: Cold or hot weather will have a lot of impact on your exercise routine. Drink more water on a hot day.