

## DIABETES PREVENTION

# PHYSICAL EXERCISE.



Physical exercise can help maintain a healthy body weight and develop a positive body image. It has positive effects on your blood sugar and blood pressure, helps relieve stress, and strengthens your muscles. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and boosts your mental wellbeing.

### WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE?

There are three basic types of exercise:

- › **Aerobic exercise**, which raises your heart rate. This can include walking, jogging, or swimming.
- › **Strength training**, which strengthens your muscles. This requires the use of weights, resistance bands, or gym equipment.
- › **Stretching exercises**, which improve the flexibility of muscles and joints.

An exercise programme should always include all three types of exercise so that the whole body and all of its muscles and joints remain as healthy as possible.

### SHOULD I SPEAK TO AN EXPERT BEFORE I BEGIN AN EXERCISE PROGRAMME?

If you have rarely or never done a lot of exercise in the past, you should speak to your doctor or therapist before embarking on a demanding exercise programme. If you are at risk of heart disease, you may be advised to undergo a stress test first. However, most people do not need this stress test prior to starting physical exercise. Start your exercise programme gradually. You should exercise slowly and only for a few minutes to begin with. As you make progress, you will be able to exercise faster and for longer periods.

### WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR WHEN I'M EXERCISING?

#### WARM UP

The risk of injury is reduced if your muscles are warm. Light aerobic exercise (such as slow walking) or stretching for five to ten minutes is ideal as a warmup.

#### EXERCISE

During the actual workout you can choose to walk briskly, swim, jog or use gym equipment. You should stretch all of your joints, including your neck, shoulders, back, and hip and knee joints. You should also plan to do strength exercises at least twice a week.

#### COOL DOWN

Do about five minutes of stretching or light aerobic exercise. After an intensive workout, these exercises can help prevent dizziness and muscle cramps.

### HOW OFTEN SHOULD I EXERCISE?

Doctors recommend that people should exercise for 30 minutes on at least five days during the week. If you are unable to exercise for 30 minutes at a time, try to exercise for ten minutes three or four times a day.

## DO I NEED TO CONSULT AN EXPERT?

If you suffer from any of the following symptoms during exercise, you should stop immediately and call your doctor or therapist:

- › Pain or pressure in the chest, arms, jaw or back
- › Nausea or vomiting
- › Heart palpitations
- › Dizziness or fainting

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXERCISE?

Many people are extremely busy and think that they don't have time to workout. However, it is important to take the time to exercise, even if you are tired or overworked. Exercise energises your body, boosting its performance. You can integrate exercise into your daily routine even on the days you really don't have time to exercise.

For example, you could:

- › take the stairs instead of the lift.
- › park your car farther away from your office.
- › take a longer route when walking from A to B.

Sitting for prolonged periods – for example when watching TV or working at a computer – can be detrimental to your health. Stand up and move around as often as you can.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR WHEN I'M EXERCISING?

To be sure that you are exercising safely and don't encounter any problems, you should:

- › drink plenty of fluids (but not caffeinated drinks) during and after exercise.
- › not exercise outdoors if it is very hot or very cold.
- › wear appropriate multi-layered clothing, so that you can add or remove a layer as necessary.
- › ensure that your footwear is comfortable and provides adequate support.

## WHO SHOULD I TURN TO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about physical exercise, please contact a health professional. The type of exercise that is suitable for you also depends to some extent on the state of your health and any ailments you may suffer from. Depending on your questions or goals, it may be worthwhile to consult a professional advice service or go on a specific programme. As a SWICA customer, you can also contact the medical staff or exercise specialists at santé24.