

Physical Therapy: Helping you manage your diabetes

Exercise and Diabetes

Physical activity is a cornerstone of diabetes treatment and prevention. Adopting a regular physical activity program can help you to lose weight, lower your blood sugar and increase the effectiveness of your insulin medication. It will also help to reduce your risk of heart disease or stroke. If you are pre-diabetic and overweight, moderate weight loss could decrease your risk of developing type II diabetes by 60%.

If you are living with diabetes, you should aim for:

- a minimum of 150 minutes of aerobic exercise every week and
- perform resistance exercise 2-3 times a week

As those living with metabolic diseases, such as diabetes, are at a higher risk for cardiovascular complications, **it is advised that you consult a medical professional before beginning any exercise program.**

A physical therapist can help you by:

- reviewing your medical history
- performing exercise testing or cardiac testing if needed
- creating a safe and effective exercise program specifically for you
- educating you on extra precautions you must take before exercising
- structuring exercise programs



Who are we?

Physical Therapists are accredited primary healthcare practitioners working in a variety of clinical settings. We integrate evidence-based therapies and patient-centered methods to create unique treatment plans for every individual. Your goals are our primary focus.

A physical therapist can help keep you mobile and increase your participation in everyday activities.

We can also help you incorporate physical activity into your lifestyle if you have:

- Pain in your joints or muscles
- Numbness or tingling in your feet
- Calluses or sores on your feet
- Pain or limping with walking
- Balance problems while walking
- Have had a stroke or have been diagnosed with heart disease
- Questions about what type of exercise is best for you



A Physical Therapist's Role in Foot Care Management

A physical therapist can help you care for your feet to keep them healthy and free from ulcers and keep you moving properly!

Diabetic neuropathy is a condition that is caused by damage to one or more nerves caused due to high blood sugar levels. The most common form is **peripheral neuropathy** with damage occurring to nerves in your lower and/or upper extremities.

Symptoms include:

- Burning
- Numbness
- Loss of sensation
- Unable to tell the difference in temperature changes
- Unsteadiness when walking
- Charcot joints
- Foot injuries and ulcers

If you have neuropathy, maintaining foot movement with a physical therapist can reduce your risk of foot ulcers from 65% to 5%

Physical therapists can offer the following services:

Education

- foot inspection
- wound management
- callus care
- toe & nail care
- skin care
- mobility aids, specialized footwear, equipment & support

Activities

- stretching and strengthening
- activities to maintain a range of motion for better mobility
- exercise/activity prescription

Pain Management

Physical Assessment

- assess ankle and foot movement
- assess balance and co-ordination
- provide neurological testing
- muscle strength assessment



Saskatchewan
Physiotherapy
Association



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN
School of Physical Therapy

Find a physiotherapist near you at www.saskphysio.org