

First steps after a diabetes diagnosis

March 7 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—When you're diagnosed with diabetes, your doctor is likely to start you on a program to lower blood sugar and help insulin work more efficiently—a regimen that may include a modified diet,

exercise and possibly medication.

Starting (or ramping up) an [exercise program](#) can be the hardest of all these lifestyle changes. Typical exercise guidelines to help manage type 2 [diabetes](#) recommend 150 minutes a week of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise, plus strength training on two or three days.

Meeting these goals, especially exercising for 30 minutes on most days, is a stumbling block for people who aren't used to working out. And, unfortunately, many people with diabetes stay sedentary. But a study published in the journal *Diabetes Care* found an alternative that may be less taxing and more effective.

The study looked at whether short but very frequent bouts of walking or strength training—three minutes *every* half-hour during an eight-hour workday—could improve the health of diabetics.

For the walking study, participants walked on a flat treadmill at a pace of two miles per hour for each of their 16 daily three-minute stints (roughly 1/10 of a mile or 200 to 250 steps, depending on your stride).

For the [strength training](#), each three-minute stint included 20-second segments alternating half-squats, calf raises, glute contractions and alternating knee raises, using only participants' own body weight.

Researchers found that the approach improved many of the participants' health markers, including [blood sugar](#) and insulin. While 48 minutes of exercise a day is higher than guideline minimums, the mini-sessions themselves are less strenuous than a single 30-minute workout. Plus, getting up every half-hour can help to overcome the dangers of sitting for long hours.

Whether you walk or strength-train or do a mix of both, this approach is

also a great first step to incorporating [exercise](#) into your life and getting the confidence to take on other fitness activities.

More information: You can read more about walking for exercise from the [American Diabetes Association](#).

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Citation: First steps after a diabetes diagnosis (2019, March 7) retrieved 13 May 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-03-diabetes-diagnosis.html>

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