

SPARC (Sport & Recreation NZ) is the government agency charged with promoting, encouraging and supporting sport and physical recreation in New Zealand.



## What is Push Play?

Push Play is about getting New Zealanders off the sofa and into a more active life. It's based on the fact that everyone can benefit from physical activity, even small amounts.

At least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week will put bounce back into your life. You'll feel better and be healthier.

[www.sparc.org.nz](http://www.sparc.org.nz)



This pamphlet on *diabetes and physical activity* is supported by SPARC.

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To order *diabetes and physical activity* or any of the Diabetes New Zealand information booklets, phone Diabetes Supplies Ltd at 0800 DIABETES (0800 342 238), or email [info@diabetes.org.nz](mailto:info@diabetes.org.nz), fax 03 434 5281 or Freepost DNZ, PO Box 54, Oamaru.

Diabetes New Zealand is a national membership organisation. Our aim is to support our members, the 39 diabetes societies throughout New Zealand and health professionals. Diabetes New Zealand acts for people affected by diabetes by:

- encouraging local support
- acting as an advocate
- raising awareness of diabetes and diabetes prevention
- educating and informing people about diabetes, its treatment, management and control
- supporting research into the treatment, prevention and cure of diabetes.

You'll find helpful information for people affected by diabetes in our pamphlets and on our website at [www.diabetes.org.nz](http://www.diabetes.org.nz).

**Take the right steps and stay healthy**  
**Join Diabetes New Zealand**  
**Phone 0800 369 636**  
**Visit [www.diabetes.org.nz](http://www.diabetes.org.nz)**



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# diabetes and physical activity



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Physical activity is the cornerstone for both preventing Type 2 diabetes and managing Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. If you have diabetes, staying active will almost certainly help you to manage your diabetes effectively and stay well and healthy.

You can reduce your chance of getting Type 2 diabetes by being physically active.

## How does physical activity help?

Physical activity can help you improve your:

- Blood sugar
- Blood pressure
- Body weight
- Mood

Regular physical activity has been proven to improve your sense of wellbeing. It can help you reduce stress levels and help you sleep better.



## What kind of physical activity is best?

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Brisk walking, swimming, cycling, Marae activities, dancing and mowing the lawns all count.

You can also snack on activity – you don't have to do it all at once. Three brisk walks for 10 minutes in the day may be more manageable than one of 30 minutes.

## How do I get started?

If you are not yet physically active, it's important to start slowly. If you are an older person, or you've had diabetes for more than five years, or you have any existing diabetes complications visit your doctor before you start.

Your doctor will discuss the benefits of being physically active with you. If you would like support with becoming active, ask your doctor or nurse to give you a Green Prescription, or phone 0800 ACTIVE (0800 228 483).

Whatever activity you choose, start small and build up slowly. If you choose walking, start with five minutes a day. Set a small goal each day that you can achieve. Build up your time every few days until you can manage longer walks.

Seek medical help if you have any pain, dizziness or shortness of breath when you are active. These symptoms can be a warning that something may be wrong.

## How do I stick to regular physical activity?

Find something you enjoy that fits with your lifestyle. Many people prefer activities with a purpose, such as walking to work, walking the dog or gardening.

Plan your activity at a time that works for you. If you aim to walk in the evening, but keep putting it off because you are too tired, try the morning when you are fresh.

Combine your activity with something else you enjoy. If you like being social, go to aerobics, join a kapa haka group or try a dance class. Walk with your co-workers at lunchtime or your family and whanau, or friends in the weekend. If you like

to have time out alone, use physical activity to enjoy some active time alone.

Always keep in mind your goal of increasing physical activity. Use every opportunity. Use the stairs instead of the lift, walk briskly to the shop, walk the kids to school – use every opportunity, every time, to stay active.

Many people have ups and downs when starting new habits. Turn any setback around. Use it as a learning experience. Work out what stopped you, so that you stay on track next time. It's all part of planning.

Congratulate yourself. You are planning goals and working to achieving them. Through doing this you are setting a good example for your family, whanau, children and friends.

## What if I'm on insulin or tablets?

If you take insulin or some of the diabetes tablets, learn about 'hypos' or low blood sugars. When you are physically active you are more prone to having low blood sugar levels.

Don't let this put you off. Ask your doctor or diabetes nurse to help you avoid low blood sugars.

Always carry some glucose tablets and a small snack when being active. Then if your blood sugar does go low, you will be able to treat it. Carry some identification or medic alert identification stating you have diabetes and what medication you take.