

A photograph of two men in a gym. The man in the foreground is wearing a dark green long-sleeved shirt and is smiling while looking towards the right. The man behind him is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and is also smiling, looking towards the camera. They appear to be on a treadmill. The background shows a large window with a grid pattern, letting in bright light. The overall mood is positive and active.

DIABETES PREVENTION

PHYSICAL EXERCISE.

BECAUSE HEALTH
IS EVERYTHING

SWICA

Diabetes Prevention: Physical exercise.

What are the benefits of physical exercise?

Physical exercise has many benefits. It can:

- burn calories and make it easier to lose weight
- help diabetics to regulate their blood sugar
- help patients with high blood pressure to reduce their blood pressure
- help reduce stress and combat depression
- strengthen bones so that they break less easily
- reduce the risk of developing heart disease

Are there different kinds of physical exercise?

There are three basic types of physical exercise:

- **Aerobic exercise:** which raises the heart rate. This can include walking, jogging or swimming.
- **Power training:** which strengthens the muscles. Here you use weights, exercise bands or fitness equipment.
- **Stretching exercises:** which boost the flexibility of muscles and joints.

An exercise programme should include all three exercise types so that the whole body, with all its muscles and joints, remains as healthy as possible.

Should I consult my doctor or therapist before I begin an exercise programme?

If in the past you have rarely or never taken a lot of exercise, you should speak to your doctor or therapist before embarking on an ambitious exercise programme. If you are at risk of heart disease, your doctor or therapist may advise you to undergo a stress test before you begin. However, most people do not need this type of test before they start taking physical exercise. Begin your exercise program gradually.

At the beginning you should exercise slowly and only for a few minutes. As you make progress you will be able to exercise more quickly and for longer periods.

What do I have to watch out for when I'm exercising?

- **Warm up first.** The risk of injury is reduced if your muscles are warm. Light aerobic exercise (e.g. slow walking) or stretching for five to ten minutes is ideal for warming up.
- **Exercise.** You can choose to walk quickly, swim, jog or use fitness equipment. You should stretch all your joints, including your neck vertebrae, shoulders, back, and hip and knee joints. You should also schedule two sets of power exercises every week.
- **Cool down.** After working out, you should do cool-down exercises to prevent dizziness and muscle cramps. Do five minutes of stretching or light aerobic exercise.

How often should I exercise?

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

Do I need to consult my doctor or therapist?

If you suffer any of the following symptoms during exercise, 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 believe that they have no time to take exercise. However, it is important to make this time – even if you are tired or overworked. Exercise gives the body more energy, which can boost performance and enable you to work harder. Exercise gives the body more energy, making it better able to deliver enhanced performance.

Even on days when you really don't have time to exercise, you can bring some physical exercise into your routine. 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 long periods – for example when watching TV or working at a computer – can damage your health. Stand up as often as you can and move around.

What else should I watch out for when I'm exercising?

To be sure that you don't have any problems when exercising you should:

- drink fluids (not fluids which contain caffeine) 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

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Who should I approach if I have questions?

If you have questions about physical exercise, you should contact your doctor or therapist. The type of exercise that is right for you also partially depends on the state of your health and any complaints you may suffer from. Depending on your questions and objectives, it may make sense to consult a professional advice service or go on a specific programme. If you, as a SWICA customer, need further help with this topic, you can also contact the medical staff or exercise specialists at santé24.