

HEALTH



JYOTI KAPOOR

APPROACH #1

DAILY EXERCISE

TWENTY-nine-year-old Nitin Kumar has managed without diabetic pills for the past one year since he learned he had diabetes, by doing daily exercises. Although he had a family history of diabetes, he was still shocked to discover he had high blood sugar. "I knew something was wrong as I suddenly started craving sweets, since I never had a sweet tooth. I also felt thirsty all the time," recalls Kumar. Since he was so young, doctors suggested that try and recover minus medicines. Instead, he was asked to avoid sugar and jog for half an hour daily. Kumar adopted this idea and decided start vigorous exercises. He joined a gym and also got a treadmill at home. "For the last one year I have been exercising daily for at least two hours," says Kumar. His workout includes cardio exercises, jogging, running and cycling. "So far I haven't needed medicines for controlling my sugar level. I do go to parties and have a pretty normal life, without any dietary precautions as such," says Kumar.

Even a less intense exercise routine is effective. "A daily walk or physical activity of at least 30-45 minutes is a must for diabetics," says Dr Ahluwalia. Exercises lower the blood sugar level and boost insulin sensitivity. During a workout, glucose (or sugar) present in the muscles gets consumed and the muscles start extracting it from liver and bloodstream

My workout is enough to keep me off medicines

instead, reducing the blood sugar level. The greater the amount of exercise, the more sugar is extracted from the blood, thus keeping blood sugar under control. Moreover, this higher demand for glucose by the muscles exerts higher pressure on cells to secrete more insulin. This helps in reducing insulin resistance among those with type-1 diabetes. Exercises also help to lower the bad cholesterol (LDL), promotes weight loss and provides protection against cardiovascular diseases. "Almost 70 percent of people with type-2 diabetes are overweight. If they lose just 7 percent of their weight, they can avoid the risks associated with diabetes by 58 percent," says Dr B M Makkar, senior diabetologist, Diabetes and Obesity Centre.

However, exercise by itself doesn't necessarily ensure a lifetime cure. Diabetes is a progressive disease that gradually gets complicated with time. The longer one lives with the disease, the higher the chances of acquiring other complications such as vascular diseases, retinopathy, limb amputation, and so on. "As the disease progresses, the need for medicines becomes inevitable after a certain stage. But exercises can definitely help in postponing this need," says Dr Makkar.

DOCTOR'S TAKE: "Regular exercise can reduce the blood sugar levels naturally and prevent the complications that arise from diabetes," says Dr B M Makkar, senior diabetologist, Diabetes and Obesity Centre.

APPROACH #3 YOGA & DEEP BREATHING

FOR 66-year-old B P Sahni, yoga has been a big boon. A diabetic for 20 years, Sahni tried many therapies, but nothing improved his condition much. Five years back he started practicing yoga daily for an hour. For the past couple of years, he has started experiencing the positive impact of this regimen. His sugar level has also dropped during this period. "It would fluctuate between 160-220 mg/dL but has now come down to 120-145 mg/dL now. Also, I have been completely weaned off insulin injections and the dosage of medicines has reduced too," says Sahni. Besides improving his physical condition, yoga has helped Sahni feel calmer too. "I have a marketing job that involves a lot of stress. I have felt that yoga soothes me mentally," says Shani. Among the various asanas he practices daily, surya namaskara and ardha chandra asana top the

list. "Ardha chandra asana is especially beneficial for diabetics as it directly works on improving the efficiency of pancreas. The stretching and balancing act increases the blood supply to various parts in the lower abdomen, and exerts

I feel calm and my sugar level has dropped remarkably

pressure on pancreas which is responsible for the secretion of insulin," says Ramesh Chandra, yoga therapist, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. Similarly, butterfly asana is beneficial as it relaxes the stiff muscles of internal organs in lower abdomen and facilitates insulin production from pancreas. Shashank asana, Pavanmuktasana and pusht asana are

useful for type-2 diabetes. Bhujangasana creates pressure in the abdomen region thus bringing blood into the entire abdominal cavity. It improves digestion and absorption of nutrients. "However, a diabetic should be cautious while practicing yoga as certain asanas could be harmful for him," says Chandra. For instance, pranayam — a deep breathing exercise — is extremely beneficial as it improves oxygen circulation in the blood and helps in the movement of glucose too. "But diabetics should not hold back the deep breath in their lungs as this could be harmful for them," says Chandra. The idea is to practice yoga under the supervision of an expert.

DOCTOR'S TAKE: "Yoga and meditation are stress busters that are vital for regulating hormonal balance in the body. These can be extremely helpful for diabetics," says Dr Ahluwalia.

Try this



OATMEAL COOKIES

In a large bowl mix ¼ cup whole wheat flour, ½ cup oats and salt together. Slowly add 4 tablespoons vegetable oil while mixing with a fork. Add 3-4 tablespoon water, a few drops at a time, until the entire mixture forms a ball. Roll out the dough and cut into cookie shapes. Place the pieces in a baking dish. Pre heat the oven and bake for ten minutes, till the cookies turn light brown.



CARROT MUFFIN

Preheat the oven. In a large mixing bowl, combine these: 1 cup whole-wheat flour, 1 cup oat bran, 1 tablespoon cornstarch, 1 tablespoon baking soda, 1 tablespoon baking powder, 1/2 tablespoon cinnamon, and 2/3 cup grated carrots. Slowly add 1/3 cup slightly diluted date syrup, 1 cup water and 1/4 cup canola oil to the mixture and mix well. Pour the batter into a lightly oiled muffin pan and bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Serve the muffins hot.



CUCUMBER JUICE

Peel 2 cucumbers and grate them. Add little sugar in 2 cups water and boil in a saucepan. When sugar dissolves, add the grated cucumber and simmer for about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool. Mix this with cucumber peel in a blender until smooth. Strain the mixture, chill, and serve with ice. Regular intake of fresh cucumber juice benefits people with lung ailments and diabetes.

VIT D IS CRUCIAL

Vitamin D deficiency is closely linked with type-2 diabetes, says a study by The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Lack of vitamin D hampers the proper functioning of insulin-producing cells and may also increase the risk of insulin resistance.

