



# Exercising with sleep problems

## Every move counts

Move more and reduce your sedentary time each day by incorporating different types of movement. It is never too late to start, some is always better than none!

## How to get started

Regular exercise has been shown to generally improve sleep for most people and helps sleep disorders such as insomnia. Certain diseases and shift work are known to affect sleep patterns. Poor sleep has been linked to an increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and heart disease. Regular exercise helps to reduce these health risks while maintaining a healthy weight and reducing anxiety, depression and stress.

Morning exercise has been shown to be particularly beneficial in maintaining the body's natural sleep pattern, while exercising just before you go to sleep can affect your sleep pattern adversely. You should determine the time of day to exercise that is least disruptive to your sleep pattern.

**Take all medicines as recommended by your doctor or pharmacist.**

## Warm up and cool down

**Always start your exercise session with a 10–15-minute warm up to loosen up the muscles and raise the heart rate safely.** Warm-up exercises include dynamic stretches, range-of-motion activities and low intensity movements. This can be done standing up, walking around, marching on the spot or seated.

Always end your exercise session with a 10–15-minute cool-down to ensure your heart rate and breathing rate return to normal safely. Cool down exercises include slowly decreasing the intensity of your activity and simple stretches.

## Be active

### Some is good, more is better

How much:	Aim for at least 150-300 minutes a week of moderate intensity or at least 75-150 minutes a week of vigorous intensity physical activity. Start moving more each day increasing to regular movement every day and add sessions as your strength and stamina improve.
How hard:	Any movement helps. Aim for moderate to vigorous intensity—aim to get slightly breathless. Take frequent breaks, if necessary.
How long:	Aim to spread out sessions throughout the week. If your fitness level is low, start with 5–10 minute sessions and add 10-minute intervals until you can comfortably exercise for longer.
What type:	All physical activity counts. Try activities within your abilities: walking, cycling, jogging, dancing, swimming, water aerobics, hiking—choose something you enjoy! Recreational team sports such as soccer, tennis or volleyball are great social activities too! Household activities such as cleaning, vacuuming or walking your dog are great activities for your health.

**W D WB E F"**

Regular exercise will help you get to sleep and sleep for longer. Regular exercise can also improve the symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress, which can also contribute to a poor sleep pattern.

## Build strength

How RK	WBWW twice a week.
How hard:	Start with light muscle strengthening exercises and progress to moderate or greater intensities over time.
How E :	<p>■ HHEWVWVWVK SSHU</p> <p>BBB HSHWHEWWEV</p> <p>WWEHEW</p>
WType:	A variety of strength exercises using free weights, resistance machines or household items such as a can of beans or a weighted water bottle as a weight. Sprints, hill sprints, shuttle runs, punching bag training and other short interval activities are other fun ways to increase strength.

### What will it do for me?

Regular strength exercises improve and maintain bone, muscle and joint health. It will also help you feel stronger, gain muscle, lose body fat, feel less depressed and more confident.

## Improve balance

How RK	At least three days a week.
How hard:	Choose 2–3 balance exercises and repeat each exercise 10–15 times.
How long:	Hold each balance for 10-30 seconds.
WType:	<p>WBWB R EGH</p> <p>HHEWVWVWVK SSHU</p> <p>BBB HSHWHEWWEV</p> <p>WWEHEW</p>

### What will it do for me?

Practicing balance exercises helps to train your body to react more quickly to a loss of balance and can help reduce the risk of falls, fractures and injuries.

## Sedentary living

**Reduce the amount of time being sedentary.** Move more and break up sedentary time. Sedentary behavior is defined as time spent sitting or lying with low energy expenditure, while awake in the context of occupational, educational, home and community settings, and travel. Higher amounts of sedentary behavior can increase the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

**Replace sedentary behavior with more physical activity of any intensity (including light intensity).** It is possible to avoid sedentary behaviour and be physically active while sitting or lying, through, for example, upper body led activities, inclusive and/or wheelchair-specific sport and activities. Try seated stretches for those with limited mobility; using active forms of transport; standing while working (within your abilities and environment), and other accessible active options to replace sedentary time.



# Exercising with sleep problems

## Your exercise, your way!

Choose activities that are easy to start with, and that you enjoy. Always exercise within your abilities. If mobility is difficult, adaptive cycling, swimming and chair-based exercises may be better alternatives. Exercise with friends and family or join a group class to improve your motivation levels and engage in social activities. Try exercising both indoors and outdoors and see which you prefer! Most importantly: **some physical activity is better than none.**

## Exercise safety

Ensure you exercise safely at all times and ask for assistance if you are unsure about any exercises.

Start with shorter sessions (e.g. 10-15 minutes) and slowly build up to the recommended level. Aim to get slightly out of breath, but exercise sensibly and stop the activity if you feel unwell, and always follow your diabetes management plan.

Always wear comfortable clothing and shoes that give good support. Take frequent breaks if necessary, and drink water before, during and after exercise. Monitor for signs and symptoms of dehydration (e.g. increased thirst, nausea, severe fatigue, blurred vision or headache).

Choose environments that you can access freely and safely. Please ask your healthcare provider or local leisure organization for advice on the best option for you.

## Helpful resources

Sleep On It Canada provides tools and resources for individuals living with sleep disorders such as a sleep diary and online support programs. <https://sleeponitcanada.ca/tools-and-resources/>



Scan for more  
physical activity  
resources!

