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CURRENT EVENTS

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Yoga for Diabetes

Are you trying to be more active but are tired of going for walks? Or maybe you enjoy walking, but you just want to try something new. The good news is, getting your steps in isn't the only way to help manage your blood sugars! Yoga is starting to be recognized as an effective tool for increasing insulin sensitivity and lowering blood glucose levels⁽¹⁾.

About Yoga

Yoga, which originated in India more than 4,000 years ago, aims at balancing and harmonizing the body, mind, and emotions⁽²⁾. Although there are many different types of yoga to choose from, all revolve around the core principles of balancing and improving a person's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Yoga incorporates elements of aerobic, resistance, and flexibility exercises, which makes it a well-rounded activity to incorporate into your life.

TYPES OF YOGA

- 1. Hatha yoga** - this style is best for beginners since it is usually paced slower than other yoga styles. If you are brand-new to yoga, hatha yoga is a great entry point.
- 2. Vinyasa yoga** - "Vinyasa" means linking breath with movement. The postures are usually done in a flowing sequence, or "flow"
- 3. Ashtanga yoga** - most people identify this as traditional Indian yoga. Like Vinyasa, Ashtanga yoga synchronizes breath with movement in a series of postures.
- 4. Bikram yoga** - this is also known as hot yoga. It is ninety minutes long and done in a room that is 105 degrees Fahrenheit with 40% humidity. Probably not for beginners!
- 5. Power yoga** - this type of yoga takes poses from Ashtanga but performs them more quickly and with added core exercises and upper body work.
- 6. Yin yoga** - this is a meditative practice that allows your body to become comfortable in a pose without doing any work. It focuses on lengthening and stretching the body.

As you can see, there are many types of yoga that you can try!⁽³⁾ Some may be more of a workout than others, but they will all help provide relaxation and stress relief. If you're new, start with Hatha or Yin yoga and work your way up to something more challenging! Regardless of what type you choose, you'll be doing good for both your body and mind.

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ACTIVE LIVING



How Yoga Helps Your Blood Sugars

Yoga asanas (postures) and pranayama (breath control) have recently become very popular, and the role of yoga in several chronic diseases, such as hypertension, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes, is now being recognized in research ⁽⁴⁾. Multiple studies on yoga for type 2 diabetes show that sticking to a yoga routine for at least 3 months improves various measures for diabetes, including fasting blood glucose and HbA1C ⁽⁵⁾. The reason behind this is still lacking research, but it is possible to make connections between the positive impacts of other forms of moderate-intensity exercise and apply those to yoga as well.

Yoga has also been shown to regulate eating patterns, which can be helpful for blood sugar management. The mind-body connection that stems from yoga practice increases self-awareness and reflection, which are beneficial in improving food choices and medication adherence ⁽⁴⁾.

The sense of relaxation that comes with yoga can also help to reduce stress. Less stress means lower cortisol (a stress hormone), which helps with blood sugar management! Yoga can impact blood sugars in many ways, and provides benefits that extend further than just increasing physical activity.

How Long Should Your Yoga Practice Be?

The recommended type, length, and frequency of yoga practice have not been clearly defined. Benefits have been shown for durations of yoga practice ranging from:

- **10-60 minutes daily**
- **45-60 minute sessions 6 days a week**
- **75 minutes sessions 3 days per week**
- **90-minute sessions twice per week ⁽²⁾.**

Many studies have shown beneficial effects after 3 months of starting a regular yoga practice, while a few studies have shown that benefits can be seen from even just 15 days. When it comes down to it, adherence to yoga practice over a period of time will be the most beneficial ⁽²⁾!

There are many more types and styles of yoga practices, and each one is unique. Although it has been shown that participating in yoga helps with blood sugar management, it is still a relatively new area of research and more quality studies need to be conducted. Add in yoga a few times per week to increase your overall physical activity and help to reduce stress. Make your yoga practice part of your life, and you (as well as your body) will begin to see the benefits!

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WHY POPULAR DIETS ARE NOT HELPING YOUR HEALTH

Before you start a new medication, you're usually told about the potential side effects, or they may be listed on the label. But when you start a new diet, you aren't usually told about the downsides- just the benefits.

People often see going on a diet as something common and casual. It's just a diet! What's the big deal? People go on diets all the time. But diets come with their consequences, too. It's not that the downsides don't exist, you're just not usually told about them.

HERE ARE THE TOP 5 REASONS WHY DIETS AREN'T HELPING YOUR HEALTH:

1. They are not sustainable

Sustainability is key to seeing the benefits from any behaviour change. Diets often promise changes in a short period of time, and focus on right now instead of the rest of your life. When you're thinking about starting a new diet, first assess whether it'll fit into your life for the long run by looking for red flags.

Red Flags That A Diet Is Not Sustainable

- It claims you'll lose X weight in X amount of time
- It focuses entirely on creating physical changes rather than health-related changes
- It eliminates certain food groups or makes certain food groups out to be "bad"
- It imposes certain rules on your eating that are very different from what you currently do
- It requires you to buy dietary supplements, weight loss aids, or metabolism boosters
- It highlights specific foods and claims they'll produce a specific result

Can you see yourself sticking to the diet for the rest of your life? Does it allow you to enjoy social situations and feel relaxed around food? If the answer is no, then the diet in question is probably not right for you.

2. They cause weight fluctuations

Because many popular diets aren't sustainable, some people develop a pattern called "yo-yo" or weight cycling. This is defined as losing weight, gaining weight, and then losing it again in cyclical manner. For most people, the desire to lose weight either doesn't go away or it strengthens with each subsequent diet, and the weight cycling continues.

Weight cycling increases the risk of mortality by increasing inflammation, hypertension, insulin resistance and dyslipidemia. Research also shows that weight fluctuation is associated with worsened heart health ⁽¹⁾. Weight cycling may actually be the factor that connects weight and health risk *more* so than overweight or obesity ⁽¹⁾.

Has weight cycling been an issue for you in the past or present?

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3. They create a negative relationship with food

DiETING is one of the most common forms of disordered eating, and research shows that dieting is common among people with eating disorders⁽²⁾. Although dieting may not always lead to an eating disorder, it can create a negative relationship with food that may lead to disordered eating or negatively impact your life in many ways.

So what does an unhealthy relationship with food look like?

You may have an unhealthy relationship with food if:

- ✔ You have rigid rules about food (specific times for eating, what food you can eat, the amount of food you eat, etc.)
- ✔ You feel guilty about eating
- ✔ You feel stressed about social eating or eating away from home
- ✔ You think about food all the time
- ✔ You feel the need to 'make up' for what you eat through exercise or restricting at another meal
- ✔ You binge
- ✔ You can't keep certain foods in your house without eating the entire thing
- ✔ You're always on or off a diet, there's no middle ground

Although there are a lot more examples, this paints a brief picture of what disordered eating/a poor relationship with food looks like. With each subsequent diet you go on, that relationship often gets a little bit (or a lot) worse. That being said, it's not your fault- it's the diet.

4. They're not always evidence-based

Despite what you read on the internet, popular diets aren't always based on research. For example, the ketogenic diet was originally created as a treatment for children with epilepsy. Although that specific use of the diet is evidence-based, its recent application for weight loss, cardiovascular health, and type 2 diabetes is not (especially when it comes to long-term effects)⁽³⁾.

A simple Google search will show you that there are plenty of diets out there to try. But just because a diet is written about on multiple websites and all of social media is talking about it, little is known about their long-term efficacy, safety, and ability to improve health.

Have you tried a certain diet because you've seen it on the Internet?

5. They often cut out or limit key nutrients

Just like a car needs gas to make it run, your body needs enough energy to function properly. Where does the energy come from? Food and the nutrients within it. That means a balance of protein, carbohydrates, fat, and all the vitamins and minerals that come with it.

When you start a new diet plan, you might exclude necessary nutrients, like carbohydrates for example. Although that may not cause an immediate issue, if it's lacking for a long time, you may create some problems for yourself. All potential issues aside, is cutting out certain foods or food groups actually sustainable or you?

Even if you're not cutting foods out, severely restricting the amount of food you eat can be a risky practice. Weight loss and fad diets do not take people's individual requirements into account, which can result in a person feeling hungry, moody, and low energy. Plus, when the body is starved of food, it responds by reducing the rate at which it burns energy (the metabolic rate). It can also result in overeating and binge eating behaviours that can lead to weight gain.

In Conclusion People often choose diets because either:

1. Someone they know is following it with success (or even people we don't know through social media)
2. The benefits it promises creates an emotional response within us, for example promising weight loss if you're unhappy with your body in some way

When we feel drawn to a specific diet for whatever reason, we tend to rationalize the decision to start following it regardless of whether there's solid evidence or if it fits our lifestyle. Before you start your next diet, talk to a Registered Dietitian first. They will be able to answer your diet questions, help determine if the diet is safe, and figure out whether it's right for you or not.

Remember: when it comes to diets, safety and long-term sustainability is key!

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Menopause and Diabetes

The risk of diabetes increases after the age of 40, but is that affected by menopause? That hasn't been an easy question for researchers to answer. It's hard to separate the effects of menopause from the effects of aging, but research has shown that the physical, metabolic and hormonal changes that women experience during menopause can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes (T2DM)⁽¹⁾. Although that may be the case, there are certain lifestyle factors you can modify to decrease your risk or help manage your diabetes.

How Menopause Affects The Body

Menopause is the phase of life that every woman will experience at some point, usually between the ages of 45–50 years old. It begins as perimenopause when menstrual cycles become irregular, and progresses to full menopause once your periods have stopped for 12 consecutive months.

Menopause affects the body in many ways, through its impact on hormones, sleep duration, and mood. These factors directly and indirectly influence blood sugar levels and can increase the risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

1. HORMONES

Estrogen

Estrogen may have a protective effect on insulin sensitivity, however the number of estrogen receptors in the body decline during menopause⁽²⁾. This leads to lower estrogen levels in the body, which can cause insulin resistance in peripheral tissues and increase the amount of glucose that circulates in the blood.

Hormones & Weight Changes

These hormonal changes can lead to weight gain as well as influence distribution of body fat around the midsection. This causes more free fatty acids to be released into the blood and increases inflammation in the body, which contributes to insulin resistance and higher blood sugars⁽¹⁾. Together, these changes can increase the risk for developing type 2 diabetes and can impact diabetes progression in women who are already living with diabetes.

2. SLEEP

The amount you sleep you get can also impact your blood sugars. Having short sleep durations (less than 5 consecutive hours per night) is a risk factor for diabetes since some studies show that lack of sleep decreases pancreatic function, which lowers the amount of insulin produced and leads to higher blood sugars⁽³⁾.

During and after menopause, women experience more than twice as many sleep disturbances than premenopausal women⁽³⁾. This can include:

Issues staying asleep • Waking early • Difficulty falling asleep

Menopause may cause sleep difficulty for several reasons, including hot flashes, mood disorders, and hormonal fluctuations. These factors can decrease the length of sleep and increase the risk for type 2 diabetes⁽³⁾.

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3. MOOD

Mood disorders are common in menopausal women, and they become more prevalent with age. As women transition through menopause, they have an increased risk of developing depression compared to before menopause. This is partly due to the increased testosterone levels, which is associated with more severe depressive symptoms⁽³⁾.

Depression can be a risk factor for diabetes, partially because individuals with depression tend to engage in less exercise, consume more calories and smoke more often⁽³⁾. As a result, women living with depression also tend to weigh more, which is another diabetes risk factor. Depression and depressive symptoms can also represent dysfunction of a hormonal system called the HPA axis as well as the sympathetic nervous system, which work together to control glucose⁽³⁾.

Aside from lifestyle behaviors and weight, the mechanism behind the link between depression and diabetes risk is not clear, however, a link does exist⁽³⁾.

HOW TO DECREASE THE RISK OF DM DURING MENOPAUSE

Since menopause is a universal milestone for women, managing menopausal symptoms can reduce diabetes risk as well. Many of the metabolic changes during menopause can be managed with lifestyle changes, such as nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation and decrease in alcohol consumption⁽¹⁾. Hormone Therapy (HT) has also been shown to decrease insulin resistance, which can lower the risk for the development of type 2 diabetes.

Nutrition

When it comes to managing diabetes or lowering your risk throughout menopause, diet is an important factor that can be modified.

Specific nutrition recommendations include:

- Eating more healthy fats, such as avocados, nuts, olive oil, and salmon
- Eating less saturated fats, such as red meats, fried foods, and high-fat dairy products
- Getting more of your carbohydrates from high-fiber sources such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Choosing lean sources of protein such as fish, poultry or skimmed dairy products
- Getting enough calcium and vitamin D from dairy, soy milk, tuna, mackerel, and salmon

To talk more about how nutrition can help with diabetes management, book an appointment with the Taddle Creek Registered Dietitians to get more personalized advice!

Exercise Physical activity helps to decrease diabetes risk and manage blood sugars, while sedentary behaviors such as television watching increases diabetes risk regardless of exercise levels⁽¹⁾. For menopausal women, physical activity also minimizes the increase in weight that can occur. Exercise also prevents age-related muscle loss, improves bone quality and improves glycemic control.

Try to engage in at least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity exercise or at least 75 min of vigorous exercise per week⁽¹⁾. Whatever you choose to do for exercise, make it fun! If you're not enjoying what you're doing, you're less likely to stick to it for the long-term.

Hormone Therapy Research has shown that hormone therapy (HT) with estrogens lowers fasting glucose levels in pre- and postmenopausal women⁽³⁾. It can also help to decrease in abdominal fat distribution, increase lipid oxidation, increase energy expenditure, and relieve symptoms such as hot flashes and mood swings. Since estrogen increases insulin sensitivity, HT may also have a direct effect in decreasing blood glucose levels⁽³⁾.

Although it may improve diabetes risk, hormone therapy isn't for everyone. Talk to your doctor about whether this is a treatment that may be beneficial for you!

Conclusion Menopause is a natural process that occurs for all women at some point in their lives. Although it may increase your risk for developing type 2 diabetes through its impact on hormones, sleep, and mood, symptoms that increase your diabetes risk can be managed with diet, exercise and hormone therapy. Talk to you doctor about which options are right for you!

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IS THE ALL-OR-NOTHING MENTALITY KEEPING YOU FROM BEING ACTIVE?

You're either successful or a failure. You're smart or you're stupid. Your life is amazing or it's awful. Something is right or it's wrong.

These are examples of all-or-nothing thinking, which also can be called black-and-white thinking. With this kind of thinking, there are only two options: things are one way or the other, and there is no gray area or middle ground. This type of thinking can impact your life in many different areas, and it can be a huge barrier when it comes to health behaviours such as exercise.

ARE YOU AN ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKER?

All-or-nothing thinking can show up in many different ways without you even realizing it.



DO YOU:

- Use describing words like: always, never, everything, totally, can't, and everyone?
- Generalize a specific event to your overall experience?
- Want to be the best, be great at everything you do and never make a mistake?
- Feel like it's challenging to get started on tasks?
- Beat yourself up about not being perfect?

All-or-nothing thinking is rooted in perfectionism. Your self-worth ends up being tied to whatever it is you want to accomplish, be, or do, and you end up judging yourself (or think that others are judging you) based on how well you can live up to the expectations you've set in your mind ⁽¹⁾.

Because of the pressure that comes with all-or-nothing thinking, it has been linked to anxiety, eating disorders, decreased productivity, depression, migraines, stress and troubled relationships ^(1,2).

The all or nothing approach can show up when it comes to nutrition, career, relationships, and finances, but where it shows up for a lot of people is when it comes to exercise. For example, if you don't have at least a full hour to devote to working out, do you skip your session altogether? Or do you give up an entire week of exercising, simply because you skipped one session?

HOW TO AVOID ALL-OR-NOTHING AND EMBRACE IMPERFECTION

There is no such thing as the perfect exercise routine. Even if something is perfect at one point in time, life happens and creates imperfections that you'll have to accept and embrace. After all, imperfection is what makes us human.

Here's how you can avoid all-or-nothing thinking so it stops getting in the way of being physically active:

1. PRACTICE MESSY ACTION AND JUST GET STARTED

If you catch yourself saying: "After X, I'll have more time to exercise..." then chances are, you have some all-or-nothing thinking happening. There will never be the perfect time to start exercising. You'll never feel less busy or have more time, so there's no time like the present to get started.

When you get started, you will mess up and mess up often, and that's okay! Even if it's not what you envision to be the 'ideal' routine, it's still something.

What conditions do you put on yourself around exercise?

2. START SMALL

Sometimes, starting something new can make us feel like we have to go all in. Unfortunately, that's not always realistic. If you're trying to make changes in your life start small and if that doesn't work, start smaller...if that doesn't work, start smaller than that.

If you're not exercising right now, you don't need to hit the gym 5 times per week for 60 minutes at a time. Start by aiming for 1-2 times per week, for 30 or so minutes per session.

Momentum is a powerful thing. Even if you just exercise once per week, that's still more than zero and you can work your way up from there. Baby steps, although not perfect, will get you closer to your goal in a much more sustainable way.

How can you take baby steps in creating a sustainable workout routine?

3. AVOID THE 'SCREW IT' SYNDROME

If you constantly view events and experiences in a negative light you will respond to them in a negative way. If you've been exercising consistently for two weeks but miss a day because you were too tired or some-

thing came up, and you view it as a bad thing, you'll beat yourself up about it. This often causes a 'screw it' attitude, which may cause you to skip the rest of your workouts and start from scratch on Monday.

Instead, acknowledge and challenge your negative thoughts.

- What makes you feel like you need to have the 'perfect' exercise routine?
- Where does that thought/idea come from?
- What critical thoughts come up for you when you exercise? When you don't exercise?

The negative thoughts may never completely go away, and that's okay. The more you're aware of them and challenge them, the easier it will be to move past them and not have them impact your life.

4. RECOGNIZE THAT MOTIVATION DOESN'T LAST

If you're constantly relying on motivation, you're setting yourself up for failure. Motivation is a great kickstarter at the beginning of a behaviour change, but it isn't always going to be there. So don't blame yourself if it disappears at one point or another! Instead of relying on motivation, focus on showing up, doing the work, being as consistent as you can, and working your way up.

Another way to not rely on motivation is to remember the immediate benefits you gain from exercise. What are those for you? Maybe it makes you feel good, gives you brain clarity, gives you a mood boost, or relaxes you?

You can't be everything and you can't be nothing. We are all somewhere in between! When it comes to exercise, it's better to be in the middle than all or nothing. Start recognizing your all-or-nothing thoughts and challenge them when they come up. Remember, you don't need to be perfect- it's a work in progress.

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The Ultimate Vegan Tofu Taco Filling

Makes 4 Servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Chewy and perfectly spiced. Layer on a taco (or burrito) with your favourite toppings, such as:

- Sauteed peppers and onions
- Diced tomato
- Sliced lettuce
- Salsa, sour cream, and guacamole



Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon light oil (such as canola or vegetable)
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce (gluten-free if preferred)
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne (optional for spice)
- 1 block (350g) extra-firm tofu, drained (no need to press it)
- 3/4 - 1 1/4 cups salsa

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350F. Line with parchment paper or lightly grease a baking sheet.
2. Mix the oil, soy sauce, and all the spices in a large bowl. It will make a brown paste-like texture.
3. Crumble the block of tofu with your fingers into the bowl with the seasoning. Mix the tofu crumbles with the seasoning making sure all of the tofu is evenly coated. Spread the tofu crumbles evenly over the pan. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, stopping to stir the tofu after 15 minutes. You want the tofu to be nice and browned. The smaller crumbles will be darker than the larger crumbles, and that's ok because it will provide a variety of texture!
4. Remove the tofu crumbles from the oven and add to a pan with the 3/4 cup salsa. You may need more salsa depending on how watery the salsa is and how wet you would like your tofu crumbles to be, add more salsa to taste. Return to the oven for 5 more minutes to heat through. Serve on taco shells with desired toppings or in a burrito.

Recipe source: itdoesnttastelikechicken.com

