

a healthy weight. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn even when you're not working out. This makes it easier to keep pounds off. As a rule, lifting heavier weights fewer times during a workout will make you stronger – and build larger muscles. Doing more repetitions with lighter weights will improve your muscular endurance. A fitness professional can help you create a strength-training routine that works for you.

Remember, you should always consult with your doctor before beginning any exercise program, especially if you have a chronic condition or have been inactive for a while.

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## Eye care tips for people with diabetes

**Routine eye exams are important for everyone. But, they're especially important if you have diabetes. People with diabetes can develop serious eye problems. In fact, diabetes is a leading cause of blindness.**

Early detection and treatment can greatly decrease the risk of complications from conditions such as:

### Diabetic retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is a condition in which diabetes affects the retina of your eye. Most people with diabetes eventually develop this condition. It can range from relatively mild to severe, sometimes causing blindness. Treatment varies by type and severity.

### Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a condition that leads to excessive pressure in the eye, causing optic nerve damage. Often, there are no symptoms. So, it's important to see your eye doctor regularly for a complete exam. Without proper treatment, glaucoma can lead to blindness.



### Cataracts

Cataracts cloud the lens of the eye, often causing significant visual problems. Cataracts often are associated with old age. But, they occur more often and at a younger age in people with diabetes.

### Vision changes

Diabetes complications sometimes can cause or worsen farsightedness and nearsightedness. Prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses may help. And, regular eye exams can help your eye doctor monitor any changes in your prescription.

### Lower your risk

To help reduce the risk of diabetes-related eye conditions:

- Keep your blood sugar level under control through proper diet and exercise, regular monitoring of blood sugar levels and proper use of medications as prescribed. And, follow any other instructions your doctor provides.
- Have your eyes checked regularly. Routine eye exams are the most effective way to detect diabetes-related eye conditions.
- Remember to schedule regular physical exams. Your blood pressure and other factors can influence your risk.

### Learn to recognize warning signs

Symptoms of diabetes-related vision problems may include:

- Blurred vision
- Changing or fluctuating vision
- Episodes of double vision
- A reduction in your field of vision
- Visual spots or flashes

If you have any of these warning signs, consult your doctor as soon as possible. And remember, you may not have any symptoms at all. So regular eye exams are your best defense.

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## Maintaining your memory as you age

**Think about the small memory glitches of daily life: occasionally forgetting a friend's name or a child's birth date. Dialing a phone number and suddenly forgetting whom you were calling. Or searching all over the house for your glasses – only to discover that you're already wearing them.**

Some people attribute these events to getting older, but severe memory lapses are not an inevitable part of aging. You can take immediate action to help promote mental clarity for years to come.

### Understand dementia

Occasional memory lapses lead some people to joke about having a "senior moment." That kind of humor, however, can mask a subtle fear of Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia – conditions that impair memory.

Dementia is much more serious than mild forgetfulness, however. The following lists gives some examples.

### Normal memory problems

- Occasionally forgetting the names of people you've recently met.
- Taking longer to remember new things.
- Occasional confusion about directions to a new location.
- Taking a few minutes to locate your car keys.

### Possible symptoms of dementia

- Frequently forgetting names of family members and longtime friends.
- Not being able to understand or follow directions.
- Wandering or getting lost in familiar places.
- Placing objects in unusual locations – for example, losing car keys for several days because they're stashed in the refrigerator.

### Maintain your overall health

To stay mentally sharp as you age, start by taking good care of your body and mind. Here are some points to remember:

**Exercise regularly.** Research indicates a link between physical activity and mental clarity. For example, one study revealed that older women who walked the most blocks per week showed the lowest levels of mental decline.

**Eat well.** A diet rich in whole grains, fresh fruits and fresh vegetables can pack a lot of antioxidants – chemicals that help sustain brain cells. Also, a healthful diet helps protect you from stroke, heart disease and other conditions that can affect memory.

**Monitor blood pressure.** Having high blood pressure may increase your risk for dementia.

**Stay clean from nicotine.** Smoking adds to your risk of high blood pressure and other cardiovascular diseases.

### Monitor your medications

Some drugs have side effects that temporarily impair memory. These can include:

- Some depression and anxiety medications.
- Certain high blood pressure medications.
- Sleep medications.
- Certain types of pain medication.