Exercise is one of the points in a triangle that aids in the management of diabetes. Along with diet and medication, exercise has been shown to have positive affects in people diagnosed with diabetes and pre-diabetes. The number one benefit regular exercise has is increasing the body’s sensitivity to insulin. Also, it helps control weight, blood pressure, mood and increases good (HDL) cholesterol. Doctors should prescribe exercise for people with diabetes, just as they prescribe medication and a proper diet.

Prescribing exercise can raise many questions. The American College of Sport Medicine recommends exercising five days a week for 30 to 60 minutes of primarily aerobic activities involving multiple large muscle groups (examples: swimming, walking, running, skiing, biking). Different organizations have different guidelines for exercise prescription, but they are all relatively similar.

When recommending an exercise program to a patient, it is best to start with small changes. One example is parking farther away from the office to encourage a 15-minute walk before work and another 15-minute walk after work, making up the recommended 30 minutes for the day. Retired? How about taking an “extra lap” around a department store? Or just parking further away from the store, if walking is a safe option for you?

Doing activities you have enjoyed in the past can increase the potential for maintaining an exercise prescription. Plus, having a good support system can be beneficial in maintaining an appropriate activity level.

“TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY. IT’S THE ONLY PLACE YOU HAVE TO LIVE.”

-JIM ROHN

Many people struggle with getting their recommended exercise in a week due to lack of motivation. Knowing what will help keep a person’s motivation is a crucial part of an exercise program, which varies from person to person. Some like wearable technology to track what has been done during the day. Others might have a dog that loves to go for walks. Some people need a partner to workout with, and other people need one-on-one sessions with a trainer who will hold them accountable and push them. Find what will work best for you.