

For better glycaemic control, eat, move sleep and stress less **Dr. Jenny Brockis**

You've probably heard what's good for your heart is good for your brain. Better than the prequel to the book "Eat, Pray, Love" remembering to eat, move, sleep and stress less have all been shown to play an important role in good diabetic management.

Refuel Smart.

There is a plethora of advice around diet and diabetes. Encouragingly, choosing to eat a predominantly [plant based diet](#) including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes has been shown to improve [glycaemic control](#) and significantly reduce the risk of type two diabetes.

Move it!

Regular exercise is perhaps the single most important factor to maintaining better glycaemic control.

Finding the opportunity for exercise in our busy and increasingly sedentary lives can be a challenge. However, moving more even for those who are allergic to the thought of wearing Lycra or don't enjoy exercise is a must not a maybe. The key is to find something you think you might enjoy and then go do it!

Even activities not traditionally considered as exercise count. If you love gardening or dancing, every moment of that extra activity is a boost to your health, your mood and better blood glucose control. Look for incidental opportunities to move more - take the stairs instead of the lift, and get outside during the day for a 10-15 minute walk.

For those looking for exercise that doesn't take too long, high intensity training (HIT) is the new kid on the block with an [American study](#) showing how three 10 minute sessions of HIT five times a week led to a 2-3 x improvement in HBA1c levels and a X3 reduction in body mass index in a group of men with type two diabetes.

Sweet dreams are made of this.

If your blood sugars have been a bit tricky to manage, the first question to ask is - how have you been sleeping?

Getting enough good quality sleep improves blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity. Most of us need 7-8 hours of good quality uninterrupted sleep for optimal health. If you can wake up feeling refreshed at the desired time *without* the aid of an alarm clock you're getting enough.

Good sleep habits include a regular bedtime schedule and routine starting around 60-90 minutes before you want to go to bed. Try winding down with a cup of chamomile tea, switching off from all your technology, and relaxing with a good book.

When we are tired we feel hungrier too, as our body looks for more energy. Getting enough sleep helps to maintain a healthy balance of ghrelin (the hormone that triggers hunger) and leptin (that tells us there is no need for more food) to keep our weight steady.

Try adding an additional 20 minutes to your sleep at night by going to bed that little bit earlier, and see what impact that has on your blood sugar control, concentration and mood!

Stress less.

A [new study](#) has found a link between stress and diabetes suggesting that choosing to practice relaxation techniques such as mindfulness can assist in boosting the body's physiological response to counteract inflammation and lower levels of stress hormones.

Taking time out to relax and be with friends and family could be the new way to boost glycaemic control and overall happiness.



Dr. Jenny Brockis is the Brain Fitness Doctor and author of *Future Brain: The 12 Keys to Create Your High Performance Brain* (Wiley) www.drjennybrockis.com