



MANAGING A SOCIAL MEDIA GROUP

A resource for Lifestyle Coaches on starting a social media group for participants.

NATIONAL
DIABETES
PREVENTION
PROGRAM

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Diabetes Translation

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Organizations and companies across the world have taken advantage of social media platforms to not only enhance their brand, but to also create communities of interest. Social media platforms have largely begun to adopt groups, where members can interact with one another on a specific topic. Lifestyle Coaches delivering the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) lifestyle change program can use social media groups to encourage group cohesion and enhance support and overall health outcomes for participants.

This resource guides Lifestyle Coaches in starting and managing a social media group to promote interaction and motivation among participants. The proposed use of social media does not replace in-person or virtual class sessions, as specified by the Diabetes Prevention Recognition Program (DPRP) Standards. Rather, social media groups can be used as forums outside of scheduled class sessions. Participants can encourage one another, interact socially, and further create group camaraderie. Many organizations that leverage social media groups have found they can serve as a key factor in retaining participants and driving overall program success.

LIFESTYLE COACH INSIGHT AND MOTIVATION

Review some of the research-backed benefits of establishing a stronger sense of community through use of a social media group.



Mobile-based interventions with educational information and social support can support positive change in dietary behavior and health outcomes.¹



Digital intervention applications such as mobile phones have shown promise and better results when paired with counselling and feedback to sustain interest, motivation, and support of participants. Also, while a participant's role in self-monitoring, goal setting, and awareness of their food intake are part of dietary interventions, delivery of personalized feedback messages in real-time can be critical for supporting self-regulation during weight loss programs.²



A systematic review of health information presented on social media revealed that social networking sites were accessed by groups that are often hard to reach via traditional health promotion messages, such as people of lower socioeconomic status, young people, and racial and ethnic minority groups. Also, helping each other was found to be mutually beneficial and identified as motivation for belonging to online support groups.³

SET UP A SOCIAL MEDIA GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS

The rest of this document provides guidance on the tactical steps required to begin a new social media group with a class of participants.

How to Set Up a Social Media Group

Follow this four-step process to set up a social media group:

- **Generate Buy-in:** Introduce the idea of forming a social media group and share your rationale.
- **Review Types of Groups and Forums:** Provide a brief description of types of groups as options.
- **Start a Group with Participants:** Get the group comfortable with the platform.
- **Manage the Group – Browsing the Rules:** Review guidance on maintaining the group.

The steps are described in detail on the next pages of this guide.

Generate Buy-In

Forming a social media group is intended to enhance the experience of the participants. Without proper buy-in from an individual class, a social media group could be viewed as more of a barrier than a useful tool. Use Session Zero to determine participants' interest in forming a social media support group. A social media group should be supplementary to the program and provide benefit. If program participants are not interested, it is not recommended to pressure them to participate. Participant preferences in creating a social media group may vary from one class to another.

To generate participants' buy-in, share the benefits of forming a social media group:

- Strengthened support through social relationships.
- Additional encouragement for participants.
- Enhanced progress and retention.

“Building the community piece contributes to longevity of the groups formed. They have made connections in a different way, with different people, and lasting relationships.”

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Additionally, Lifestyle Coaches should consult with their organization's leadership for permission before beginning a social media group. Depending on the size of the organization, there may be a communications team or social media manager on staff who can provide guidance and assistance. Organizations may also have their own rules or best practices for social media activity.

Create a Code of Conduct

Discuss ground rules as a group. Participants can voice how often they want to receive notifications and what kind of information they would like to post. This process should be collaborative to emphasize that everyone has a part. This discussion will lay the groundwork for a code of conduct, which should be developed by the Lifestyle Coach and shared with the class before setting up the social media group. The Lifestyle Coach should review what type of information is appropriate and not appropriate to share in a social media group. This includes alerting participants of privacy concerns such as listing full names, photos, locations, or other personal information.

Understand Participant Preferences

It will be important to understand what participants want and expect from the social media group. Platforms each have different features that might accommodate their preferences, as detailed below.



Discussion. Exchange messages with the group. “Favorite” or “like” messages to show support to others. This might be used to answer a prompt about lifestyle choices, share success stories for milestones, share healthy recipes, or seek advice.



Photos and Videos. Post photos or videos and view contributions made by other group members. Encourage participants to share a photo of their step count or film a how-to video for cooking a healthy recipe.



Live Streaming. Have participants tune in to hear the Lifestyle Coach speak.

Participants can leave posted comments to be addressed during the presentation or to interact with other listeners. This feature would allow Lifestyle Coaches to perform live demonstrations, such as yoga exercises.



Hashtags. Connect to a wider range of public posts on the same topic being discussed in the private group. For example, use #HealthyEating when discussing eating habits within the private group so that participants can explore trending healthy meals posted by the general public.



Multiple Channels. Enable additional channels for private messaging between members or special interest groups. This feature would be helpful to add channels to group participants completing challenges together for accountability.

REVIEW TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS

Use the features described in the section above and the table below to help decide which type of social media group to use. Explain the use and features of each type as accurately as possible and without bias. Consider how participants currently interact with these platforms and select the option they are most comfortable using. The decision should be driven by participants, not influenced by the Lifestyle Coach. Lifestyle Coaches can frame the discussion or run a voting process to assist with decision-making, but the participants should be active in the process.

Type	Examples	Usage Tips	Possible Features
Social Network Platforms	Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn	Connect through popular networks. Create a private group or page for others to join. Use the group to stay in touch, receive and comment on focused messaging, post recipes, share videos, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos/Videos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Live Streaming <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hashtags <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Channels

Photo and Video Messaging	Marco Polo, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube	Send quick photos with captions. Pop in and out of video conversations. Allow sharing of candid video confessions, favorite exercise and health videos, cooking tips, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos/Videos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Live Streaming <input type="checkbox"/> Hashtags <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Channels
Messaging Groups	Slack, WhatsApp, Discord App, GroupMe App, WeChat App	Have back-and-forth discussion through a mobile app that makes it easy to organize discussions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos/Videos <input type="checkbox"/> Live Streaming <input type="checkbox"/> Hashtags <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple Channels
Discussion Forums and Community	Reddit, Meetup, Quora	Create a community group together. Engage in a discussion thread about family eating habits, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos/Videos <input type="checkbox"/> Live Streaming <input type="checkbox"/> Hashtags <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Channels
Reminder Applications	Remind App, Phone Text Message Apps	Use basic phone features to send mass messages with one-directional communication.	N/A

As you observe your group's dynamics, consider the significance of personal privacy within social platforms. Your research and selection of a platform should include review of privacy options. Discussion with your group will help define the best solution for your interactions.

START A GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS

Once a group type has been chosen, get participants familiar with the social media platform.

"We find our social media groups have been beneficial in engaging our groups and building cohesiveness."

King Daughters Medical Center

Set Up the Group

The Lifestyle Coach will be the administrator. As the administrator, the Lifestyle Coach will need to create the group on the chosen platform, configure all settings (such as assigning an appropriate name, writing a description, and adjusting privacy settings), and add group members. Additional details are provided in *Manage the Group – Browsing the Rules*.

Reassure Participants

Lifestyle Coaches should emphasize that these social media groups are private. Participants should be added by invitation only, and the group should not be made publicly accessible. Remind participants that

they must follow the code of conduct and treat all class members with respect, even when behind a screen.

When a platform has been selected, follow up by email with details of the decision. This will allow those absent from the discussion to be informed. Provide basic instructions on getting started with the platform. Setting up the social media group early on during the program can increase its use among participants and overall effectiveness.

Master the Technology

Not all participants may be comfortable navigating and using a social media group. Lifestyle Coaches and participants alike will vary in their confidence and skill in using social media platforms and features. To overcome any uncertainties with using social media technology, consider the following:

- Research the “how-to” of the chosen social media type or platform. With this “how-to” guide, experiment with the platform. This will help ensure smooth execution when the platform is rolled out to participants.
- Review the “Support” or “Help” page for your selected social media platform. Some social media platforms will provide steps for “Getting Started” and instructional videos that guide users through how to set up and troubleshoot using their platform. Note the differences in guidelines for how administrators and members should interact with the platform.
- Share helpful resources with the participants. Encourage them to review these resources prior to setup.

Test the Technology

To ensure all participants are comfortable and on the same page, schedule time as a group to walk through account or profile creation and basic platform functionality, such as making a post.

Troubleshoot any initial issues with the platform. Some participants may require additional one-on-one time.

MANAGE THE GROUP – BROWSING THE RULES

Managing a social media group promotes fostering community, group cohesion, and a safe space for sharing and feedback. Some administrative work is necessary to succeed. Structure is key to maintaining a positive participant environment.

Group Admissions and Security

Establish a protocol for accepting group members and ensuring privacy.

- Wherever possible, configure your social media group as a private, secret, or closed group. Only individuals invited will have access to other members and resources shared within the group. Group access should be limited to the participants or Lifestyle Coach team members where possible.
- If necessary, provide guidance on user and profile names. In the interest of privacy, members may opt for an alias to avoid using their first and last name or opt out of using their personal photos on the platform.

Ground Rules and Etiquette

Ensure the agreed upon code of conduct is being followed. Remove inappropriate posts and refer participants back to the code of conduct when needed. Understand notification settings and how to prevent the social media group from being viewed as spam. Establish that the group is not a replacement for scheduled class sessions. Interaction with the social media group is solely a supplement to scheduled class sessions and a way for participants to interact outside of formalized program activities.

As the Lifestyle Coach and administrator of the group, set the tone with your use and presence in the social media platform.

- Share your excitement over conversations that reinforce concepts learned in class sessions.
- Determine topics or discussion questions to post or share to prompt interaction among the group.
- Post videos developed by CDC on specific curriculum topics to engage members in conversation.
- Send prompts aligned with the curriculum to get participants ready for the upcoming topics. PreventT2 includes prompts in each module.
- Be active in the group to moderate behavior that violates the established code of conduct.
- Provide positive feedback on shared milestones, affirm participants when they share something with the group, and set an example for appropriate interaction.
- Be clear that there is no expectation to interact with the social media group and that all participant activity is voluntary. Attendance is not tracked, and there is no expectation to participate.
- Encourage participants to like and share each other's posts to offer support and acknowledgment.



WRAP UP

Making that initial decision to form and manage a social media group starts with you, the Lifestyle Coach. The next step is to generate buy-in and educate your group on the benefits and possibilities of this type of interaction. Research has shown that social support can yield positive change and experience in group members. Hopefully, you will also see great results in your group(s) and collect your own best practices as you continue to deliver the National DPP lifestyle change program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you to the following organizations that allowed their personnel to contribute to this document:

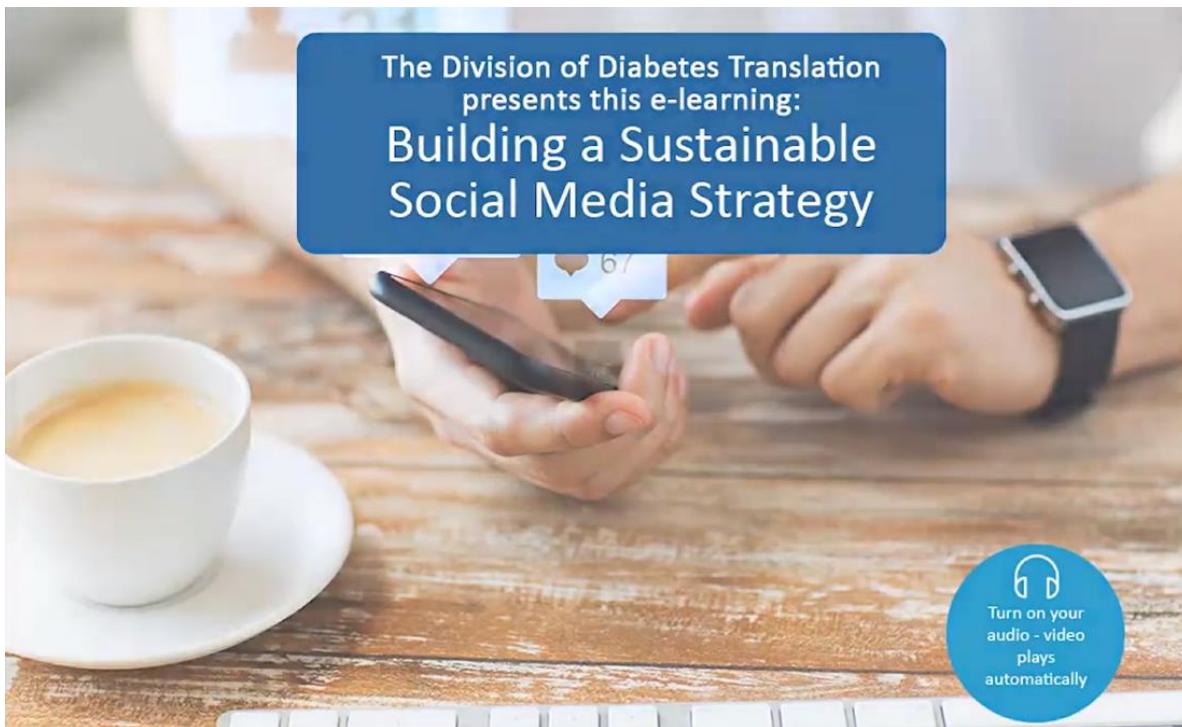
- Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

- Kings Daughters Medical Center
- Panhandle Public Health District
- Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
- Bear River Health Department

APPENDIX A: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Quick Learn: Building a Sustainable Social Media Strategy – <https://youtu.be/52aZnNRf0sA>

The nuts and bolts of creating a social media strategy to build engagement with your audience to promote diabetes self-management and type 2 diabetes prevention.



APPENDIX B: USING GLENN'S STORY

Lifestyle Change Program Testimonial for Promotions – Glenn's Story

Drop-In Article

To Use: You can post this article to your organization's website, publish it in your organization's newsletter, and/or send it to a local newspaper or magazine. Fill in the yellow highlighted portions with details specific to your lifestyle change program.

Always Busy? Trucker Glenn Shares Tips for Staying Healthy on the Go

Between ever-changing work shifts, family duties, managing a household, and other daily responsibilities, it can be hard to keep track of your schedule – let alone keep up with a healthy lifestyle. When you're so busy that you never quite know where you'll be and when, your time, environment, and food options are often out of your control. It may feel impossible to do the things you need to stay healthy. But no matter how busy you get, you can have a healthy lifestyle – even on the go!

Just ask Glenn Keller. Glenn is a cross-country trucker, which means he is on the road and away from home for days or weeks at a time, and his schedule and location are constantly changing.

When Glenn started out 30 years ago, there weren't any healthy food options at the truck stops along the way.

"There was no healthy option if you didn't bring it with you," he says.

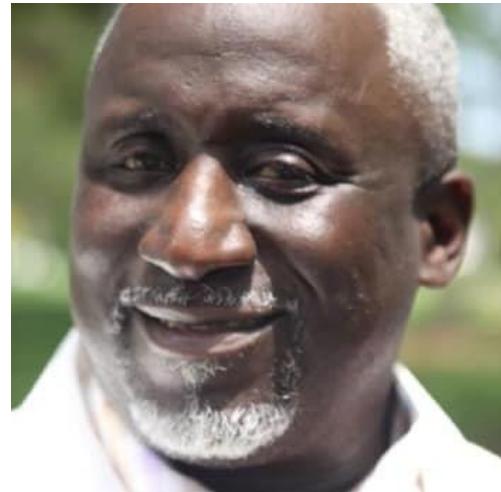
On top of that, long shifts sitting in the cab of his truck made getting enough physical activity a challenge. He knew he needed to make some changes for his health, and when his doctor diagnosed him with prediabetes – which is when your blood sugar levels are high, but not high enough for type 2 diabetes – he was ready to get started.

Others may have felt discouraged in Glenn's situation, but Glenn didn't let anything get in the way of his new goals for better health. When a colleague from the Healthy Trucking Association of America recommended he join a lifestyle change program from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP), Glenn signed right up. The program was virtual and took place through an app on his phone, which allowed him to participate from the road.

The program helped Glenn learn the importance of healthy eating, physical activity, and managing stress. He used the skills and support he gained from his lifestyle coach and fellow program participants to find creative ways to work his goals into his lifestyle as a "truck guy."

So, what are Glenn's tips for staying healthy on the go? Take a look – and if you have a busy schedule like Glenn, give them a try!

- **Got 10 minutes? Do some squats!** It takes Glenn 10-15 minutes to fill up his truck at the gas pump, so he uses that time to squeeze in some physical activity. At first, Glenn could only do a few standing squats. But he kept at it, and now he can do 30! Think about the times in your day when you can fit in some quick and simple activities between other tasks – and Glenn says not to worry if others are watching! "At first, it's like, is everybody looking



GLENN KELLER

NATIONAL DPP LIFESTYLE CHANGE PROGRAM
PARTICIPANT

at me?" says Glenn, but it didn't take long for him to replace his worry with pride as he continued to improve!

- **Use your break to get up and move.** Glenn has a required 30-minute break every 8 hours. Instead of spending that time sitting in his truck, Glenn now uses it as a chance to get up and get moving! He sets a timer and takes 30-minute walk or uses an app on his phone to get some movement into his day. "I have all the physical activity apps on my phone!" he says. Many of us have breaks during our workday, and that's a great time to get up and move.
- **Grab a fruit cup – or another healthy snack – when and where you can find it.** Recently, Glenn noticed at least one truck stop has started selling fresh cups of fruit – and he makes sure to take advantage! "I am able to get some fruit instead of a hamburger," he says. While healthy options may not always be available, make sure to take advantage when and where you can to grab a fruit cup or other healthy snack! Or better yet, bring healthy snacks with you so you always have them as an option.
- **Hold yourself accountable.** Like all of us, even Glenn has days when he might not make the healthiest choices. He'll be the first to admit that "every day isn't a fruit day!" Through the lifestyle change program, he was able to keep himself accountable by being honest with his coach – and himself – by reporting his meals. And it helped him stay on track! He even learned ways to stay accountable after the program ended by having a family member or friend be his accountability partner. "Sometimes you just want something unhealthy," says Glenn, "But even then, I might not eat as much as I normally would have because I knew I had to report it." The great thing about the lifestyle change program is it holds you accountable to your coach and to yourself. It can also give you the chance to re-evaluate your goals and make adjustments so you can try again!
- **Find a routine that works for you – even if your schedule keeps changing!** Like many people, Glenn found that the hardest part of making healthy lifestyle changes was keeping to a schedule. Because of his job, it was difficult to even know where to start. "Being a truck guy, I was on the road all night, other times all day, with deliveries, pick-ups, and breaks always at different times – so it took a minute to get things lined up." Instead of a schedule, Glenn worked on creating a *routine*. Like Glenn, your break may not be at the same time every day, but you can still use it the same way each time to do some physical activity, relieve stress, or prepare a healthy meal. Start by planning ways to use this time to work on your goals. When you create a routine, it doesn't matter what time it is as long as you do it!

Glenn was able to use what he learned in the program to find ways to make healthy lifestyle changes that *worked for him!* On being a part of the program, Glenn says, "I feel blessed for the opportunity – I got accustomed to the idea of becoming healthier."

You can be like Glenn and get healthier too! If you have prediabetes or are wondering if you are at risk, learn more about [name of program], [part of the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program OR a CDC-recognized lifestyle change program]. At [name of program], participants learn ways to eat better and increase physical activity while connecting with others who share the same goals for improving their health. [Add any other interesting details about your program, such as grocery store tours or cooking demonstrations.]

Visit [program web page] to get more information about the [name of the program].

Sample E-Newsletter Copy

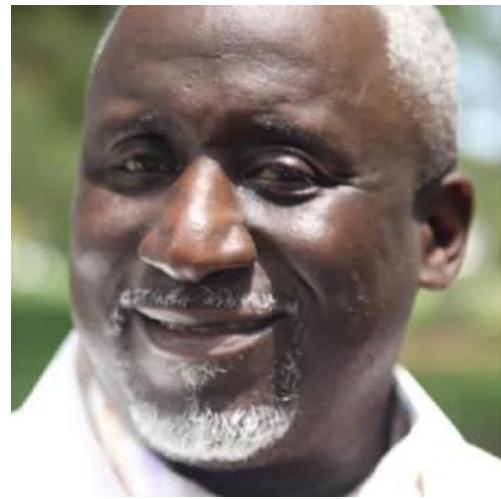
To Use: The following e-newsletter copy can be used to promote the program in online e-newsletters and email blasts. Consider placements in a community newsletter, local health care provider or network newsletter, and/or faith-based newsletter.

Trucker Glenn Makes Healthy a Priority – Even on the Go

Between ever-changing work shifts, family duties, managing a household, and other daily responsibilities, it can be hard to keep up with a healthy lifestyle. But no matter how busy you get, you can have a healthy lifestyle – even on the go!

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GLENN KELLER

NATIONAL DPP LIFESTYLE CHANGE PROGRAM
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You can be like Glenn and get healthier too! If you have prediabetes or are wondering if you are at risk, learn more about [name of program], [part of the CDC’s National Diabetes Prevention Program OR a CDC-recognized lifestyle change program]. At [name of program], participants learn ways to eat better and increase physical activity while connecting with others who share the same goals for improving their health. [Add any other interesting details about your program, such as grocery store tours or cooking demonstrations.]

Visit [program web page] to get more information about the [name of the program].

Social Media Copy and Infographic

To Use: Post the infographic with Glenn’s tips on Facebook or Twitter. Add your own logo and program URL to the bottom. Some suggested social media post copy is available below to get you started, but feel free to customize it with your own language.

Post Copy
Glenn Keller’s tips for staying healthy on the go: Instead of struggling to keep to a schedule, try creating a routine. Your work break may not be at the same time every day, but you can still use it the same way each time – to do a physical activity, relieve stress, or prepare a healthy meal. When you create a routine, it doesn’t matter what time it is as long as you do it! Get more tips when you join [insert name of program]. Learn more: [insert link to program website]
Glenn Keller’s tips for staying healthy on the go: Got 10 minutes? Fill it with physical activity! Do squats or jumping jacks in place. Don’t worry about looking silly – be proud that you can do it! Get more tips when you join [insert name of program]. Learn more: [insert link to program website]
Glenn Keller’s tips for staying healthy on the go: Use your work break to get up and move! Set a timer and take a walk or use an activity app on your phone. Get more

tips when you join [insert name of program]. Learn more: [insert link to program website]

Glenn Keller's tips for staying healthy on the go: Healthy food options might not always be available, so be sure to grab a fruit cup – or another healthy snack – when and where you can find it. Get more tips when you join [insert name of program]. Learn more: [insert link to program website]

Glenn Keller's tips for staying healthy on the go: Hold yourself accountable by being honest with yourself and your lifestyle change coach. Remember that if something is not working, you can make adjustments and try again! Get more tips when you join [insert name of program]. Learn more: [insert link to program website]

Infographic: Glenn's Tips

Hey there! I'm Glenn.

ALWAYS ON THE MOVE?

Use Glenn's tips for a healthy lifestyle.

Glenn Keller, a cross-country trucker, is on the road days and weeks at a time. When he found out he had prediabetes, he joined the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DDP) Lifestyle Change Program—and participated using a phone app.

Move during breaks.

Every 8 hours, I have a 30-minute break from driving. I set my phone timer and go for a walk.

Get Active.

When I stop for gas, I do squats by the pump. Who cares if I look silly—I'm proud of myself!

Grab a healthy snack.

At rest stops, I'll look for a fruit cup or another healthy snack instead of a hamburger.

Hold yourself accountable.

I'm not perfect, but if I eat something unhealthy, I'm honest about it with my coach.

It's important to let people know just how important it is to have your health.
—Glenn Keller

GET MOVING!

Join the CDC's National DPP Lifestyle Change Program.

CDC.gov/diabetes/prevention

NATIONAL DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

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