

@THEFITTESTDIABETIC

 THE FITTEST DIABETIC PRESENTS

The Exercise & Type 1 Playbook

Train hard, sweat, and compete with Type 1 — without the crash running your life. Lived experience, not a lecture.

START HERE

Hey, I'm Sam.

I've had Type 1 since I was 12 — over 18 years of training, racing, screwing it up, and figuring it out.

This Playbook is everything I wish someone had handed me back then. Two things before we start:

- 1. You're not fragile.** You're an athlete who happens to manage data. That reframe changes everything.
- 2. This is lived experience, not medical advice.** I'm a Type 1 who trains — not your doctor. Nothing here tells you what insulin to take. Your healthcare team owns the medical calls; I'll give you how I think about it, the patterns, and a way to find your own answers.



HOW TO USE IT

Read it front to back once, then keep coming back to Chapter 7 — that's the method you'll run for the rest of your life.

My story

I was diagnosed with Type 1 on 19 November 2007, at 12. I remember the moments that matter: knowing something was wrong at school when I couldn't be bothered going outside. My blood sugar so high I wasn't far off a coma. My mum crying as she drove me to hospital — she understood what it meant before I did.

Here's the thing: I decided pretty much straight away this wasn't going to define me. I loved sport, loved the team environment, loved becoming the best version of myself — and I was competitive as hell.

The name? "The Fittest Diabetic" isn't me claiming to be the fittest diabetic in the world — I'm well aware I'm not. It's what I'm *striving* for. It's motivation, not a title. And I hope it does the same for you.



The mindset shift

The biggest thing holding Type 1s back from training isn't their blood sugar. It's their head.

The trap: fear of going low → avoidance → the whole thing gets thrown in the "too hard basket." The fear's understandable. But with a bit of planning, it's genuinely manageable.

The truth most people miss: exercise is one of the *best* things you can do for your Type 1 management. Blood sugar during training is just data — it's only a problem if you're unprepared or inexperienced. And inexperience is fixable.

Too scared to start? Talk to someone who's done it. Get a plan. Take baby steps. You'll be surprised how easy it actually is.

FROM MY JOURNEY

My parents kept a close eye on my management — but they never babied me. That let me go out and make mistakes. And that's how I actually learned.



CHAPTER 3

How exercise moves your blood sugar

Different training does different things to your levels. In general terms:

GLUCOSE RESPONSE · BY SESSION TYPE



- Lifting & intervals — spikes now, then drops hours later or overnight
- Steady cardio — a gradual drop

Mixed stuff (HYROX / CrossFit) is the most volatile — spikes *and* sharp drops in one session.

If you take one bit of physiology from this Playbook, make it the delayed drop after lifting. It caught me out for years.

Before you train

My whole pre-workout game is one word: **plan**.

The golden rule — insulin on board. I try to avoid training with much active insulin. The simplest way to dodge a nasty low is to schedule your session for when you don't have a stack of fast-acting insulin still working.

By session type: steady cardio — start a little higher or take pre-workout carbs.

Lifting/intervals — start in range and manage from there. HYROX/CrossFit — don't over-restrict carbs, and carry fast sugar on you.

THE HONEST BIT ON "HOW MUCH INSULIN"

Most T1 athletes find they need *less* insulin around exercise — but the amounts are deeply individual. That's exactly what you work out with your diabetes team, using the method in Chapter 7. I won't hand you a number that could put you on the floor.



During training

What I monitor: I wear my Garmin so I can glance at my glucose without breaking stride. On long or aerobic sessions I check more often — the chance of a workout-wrecking low is higher.

What I carry: always jelly beans (my poison of choice). On anything long, I top up carbs roughly every 30 minutes.

Real low, or just tired? Sometimes you can't tell — which is the whole reason I check often, so I always know which way I'm *trending*. And if I'm trending down and can feel it? I stop. Not worth the risk.



After + overnight

The drop that gets people isn't during the workout — it's hours later, usually at night.

How I manage it: at dinner/dessert I lean on **complex, slow-releasing carbs** to hold steady through the night. I tune my overnight approach over time — but how much is trial and error, and it's the kind of thing you dial in **with your diabetes team**.

Recovery is the same as for anyone: sleep, hydration, good food. I add creatine and fish oil. Nothing magic — the basics, done consistently.

THE DELAYED DROP

After a hard lifting or interval session, keep half an eye out that night. It's the single most common place a good training day turns into a rough one.



Build **your** playbook

The truth: I can't give you your numbers. Nobody can. What I *can* give you is the method I used to find mine — through experience and logging, learning to read my own trends.

1 Establish your baseline

Log waking glucose, carb ratios, your usual routine. Know "normal" before you change anything.

2 Isolate one variable

Test one activity at a time. Same duration, same time of day, to start.

3 Lock a pre-check routine

Check ~30 min before, again right before you start, and note the trend arrow.

4 Watch it mid-workout

Check regularly. Note what you did and what happened.

5 Track recovery + overnight

Log at the end, then keep an eye out for hours after — especially overnight.

6 Review, spot patterns, refine — with your team

Find the repeatable patterns. Make small, safe adjustments together with your diabetes team.

HONEST NOTE ON YOUR CARE TEAM

I've personally found other Type 1 *athletes* the most useful source of real-world advice — they've lived it. But your healthcare team owns the medical and dosing side. Use both. Not one instead of the other.

Logging is everything — it's how you spot the trends. I got so into it I built an app to do it for me. (More at the end.)

My gear & tools

CGM: Dexcom G7 · **Insulin:** Humalog + Lantus (MDI) · **Watch:** Garmin (Dexcom data at a glance) · **Apps:** Garmin, Strava, Dexcom — and The Fittest Diabetic coaching app ·

Carrying: a running belt for my phone + jelly beans, always.

Worth the money vs. hype: your sensors, a good smartwatch, and the app. That's where the real value is.



My biggest lessons

The scariest moment: I got caught about 10 km from my car on a run, going low, out of jelly beans, drifting in and out of reception. That day taught me more than any textbook.

THE RULES I'D TATTOO ON EVERY T1 ATHLETE

1. Plan around your insulin. **2.** Always carry fast carbs — more than you think. **3.** Check often; know your trend, not just your number. **4.** Expect the delayed drop. **5.** Experiment and log — find *your* patterns.

SIDEBAR — THE 20 / 200

**Sub-20 5k.
200kg squat.
Same day.**

I was training hard for it, then got knocked out for a month by a (non-diabetes) illness. Still on the redemption list — coming back for it after the marathon. Diabetes was never the thing in the way.



WHAT'S NEXT

You can train hard and stay in range.

It takes a plan and a bit of trial and error — but it's doable, and it's worth it. I built this because I wished it existed when I was 12. If it helps even one Type 1 get off the fence and get after it, it's done its job.

FREE WEEKLY

Get the newsletter

Real, lived-experience tips for training with Type 1 — every week. Grab your own copy of this too.

[SIGN UP →](#)

COMING SOON

Get on the app waitlist

The Fittest Diabetic turns your CGM, training & recovery data into a daily, glucose-aware coaching brief.

[JOIN THE WAITLIST →](#)

[Share with a Type 1](#) — send them the link →

[Email me your biggest challenge](#) →

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People on the same journey

Real, unedited messages from Type 1s who found the account — the exact people this is for.



Hi mate

We are CF family with our 13 year old son 2 months getting diabetes.
Our son is one of NZs best Downhill racers and also does CF so while our world changed 2 months ago he is away and competing once again

My partner and i found your account and will follow any updates you do in the future and more so as your a competitive crossfitter.
All the best mate



hey bro im a 17 yr old t1 diabetic from nz who's really into the gym and fitness as a whole. just wanted to say your stuffs really inspiring and its so cool to see someone else on the same journey as you. thanks for sharing your story brother.



Hey Sam this is brilliant well done for getting the word out there. Tomorrow is my 50th diaversary and they told may parents I wouldn't make it HA! There were a lot of things banned when I was growing up with type 1, I only got into exercising about 10 years ago and I love it, the past 12 months have been erratic with surgeries and a broken wrist (still trying to fix it) but I have the best diabetic team who challenged me to try things I would not have believed possible regarding insulin and food and exercise, I know what I need to do now but it has taken a long time, so to have this to encourage other people and to offer some advice is amazing. Hyrox amazes me, maybe if I was 20 years younger without the other health conditions I would be so into that. You have my deepest respect and gratitude. 🙏

The Fittest Diabetic provides general education and lived experience for people with Type 1 diabetes who exercise. It is not medical advice and does not replace guidance from your healthcare team. Always work with your clinician on insulin, dosing, and any changes to your diabetes management.