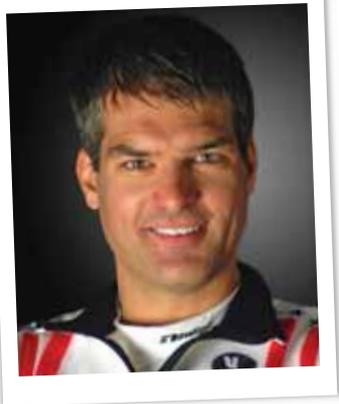


# Jay Hewitt

Jay Hewitt is a triathlete and motivational speaker for people with diabetes.



## 1. How did you become involved in diabetes education?

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 1991 and initially started racing marathons and Ironman triathlons in the early 2000's just to prove to myself that I could do it. My racing was going well and I started getting invitations to speak at diabetes events. I developed my Web site [www.jayhewitt.com](http://www.jayhewitt.com) and my speaking message of "Finish Line Vision" to help people overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. After I qualified for the US National team for long distance triathlon and raced the World Championships in 2004 to 2006, I began to speak at diabetes events for one of my sponsors, LifeScan. I recently partnered with the Joslin Diabetes Center to be the captain of "Team Joslin," to help raise money for Joslin's diabetes research and education High Hopes Fund. I'm also starting a triathlon camp for kids with diabetes.

## 2. How do you use your personal experiences to encourage others with diabetes?

Racing Ironman triathlons requires discipline, patience and determination, constant attention to nutrition and hours and hours of workouts, and most of all, heart. It is the longest, most grueling endurance race in the world, and some days I am so exhausted I feel like I just can't keep going. But I have a vision of that finish line, and I will not let diabetes or anything else stop me from getting to that little white line in the road. Living with diabetes is the same. It requires constant attention to blood sugar, insulin, nutrition and exercise, all day, everyday. I tell peo-

ple that life with diabetes can seem like a long, grueling race that you will never finish, and many days you may feel like quitting. We all feel that way at some point, but you will make it to the finish line. It will be even better because you overcame so much.

## 3. What was your biggest challenge after your diagnosis?

My first challenge was psychological — accepting that anything can happen and it could be a lot worse than diabetes. Being forced to accept that was a blessing, and has made me more appreciative and determined. Another challenge was adjusting to the multiple daily tasks of checking blood sugar, insulin injections, thinking about how everything could affect my blood sugar, food, exercise, stress, illness, etc. For several years I was reluctant to disclose that I had diabetes, fearing that others would view me as sick, different and incapable of certain things. But it soon motivated me to achieve goals that I would not have tried without it, and maybe even inspire others to do the same. That's why diabetes is the best thing that ever happened to me.

## 4. What do you hope to achieve with your work?

I want to motivate people to set high goals — those with failure potential — and go get them! My Finish Line Vision message ([www.finishlinevision.com](http://www.finishlinevision.com)) is about making the bad things that happen to you, the best things that happen to you. I want people to realize that diabetes is an opportunity to prove how strong you are and achieve dreams that you never would have pursued otherwise. I am so honored if my work inspires youth and adults to do that.

## 5. What do you see as the biggest challenge for those with diabetes?

The biggest challenge for people with diabetes is staying disciplined and "in the race." Diabetes is a never-ending chore, frustrating and often hard to explain. Why does my blood sugar do this on one day but totally opposite the next, even though I didn't change anything? Diabetes requires more than treatment and medication, it requires a lifestyle — medication and regular exercise, healthy nutrition, discipline and thinking. But that is just the kind of lifestyle everyone should lead. ■