



Exercise for Bone Strength

Our bones naturally lose mass or density as we age, leading to brittle bones that are more likely to fracture (especially in the hip, spine, and wrist). When the body fails to form enough new bone, it causes fragile, porous bones, also known as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis can occur in men, but it is most common in women over the age of 65. Fortunately, there is a non medical way to help your bones stay strong and decrease your risk of osteoporosis: exercise.

The National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends the following five steps to improve and maintain bone health and prevent osteoporosis:

1. Get your daily recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D
2. Engage in regular weight-bearing exercise
3. Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol
4. Talk to your healthcare provider about bone health
5. When appropriate, have a bone mineral density (BMD) test and take medication

How much should I exercise per week?

Weight-bearing, impact exercises: 30 total minutes on most days of the week.

Resistance/strengthening exercises: 2-3 days

1. Do one exercise for every major muscle group, striving for a total of 8-12 different exercises 2-3 days per week. The major muscle groups include:

- Upper back
- Middle back
- Lower back
- Shoulders
- Upper arms
- Forearms (wrists)
- Chest
- Abdominals
- Hips
- Thighs
- Calves (lower legs)

2. Try to do two sets of 8 to 10 repetitions for each exercise. Rest for about 30-60 seconds between each set.
3. If you have osteoporosis or low bone mass, use lighter weights and do 10-15 repetitions.

If you can't fit your exercise into one session during the day, spread your exercises throughout your day in shorter sessions.

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Types of Exercise

High-impact weight-bearing activities:

- Dancing
- High-impact aerobics
- Hiking
- Jogging/running
- Jumping Rope
- Stair climbing
- Tennis

Low-impact weight-bearing activities:

- Elliptical training machines
- Low impact aerobics
- Stair-step machines
- Walking (treadmill/outside)

Flexibility exercises: These exercises are helpful in improving muscle strength and reducing the risk of falls and fractures.

Strength training activities:

- Functional movements, such as standing and rising up on your toes
- Lifting weights
- Using elastic exercise bands
- Using weight machines
- Lifting your own body weight

Balance exercises: Tai Chi, yoga and Pilates (people with low bone density or osteoporosis should avoid certain positions such as forward-bending exercises to prevent fractures).

Functional exercises:

- Getting up from a chair
- Climbing stairs
- Lifting grocery bags

What kind of exercise is best?

For individuals who do not have low bone density scores or osteoporosis:

Combining high-impact exercise and strength training is the key to maintaining and building bone mass.

For individuals who have low bone density or osteoporosis:

Low-impact weight-bearing activities and light strength training activities are a great way to improve bone density.



Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-433-2320

Sources: National Institutes of Health, National Osteoporosis Foundation, The Mayo Clinic, Web MD

