

EXERCISING

WITH

OSTEOPOROSIS



Regular physical activity significantly slows the age-related bone loss that causes osteoporosis, and it may also increase bone mineral density and strength as well. Exercise also increases muscle strength and endurance, enhances mobility and can reduce the risk of falling. The key to maximizing the benefits of exercise is to follow a well-designed program that you can stick with over the long-term.

Getting Started

- Talk with your health care provider before starting an exercise program and ask for specific programming recommendations.
- Take all medications as recommended by your physician.
- A well-balanced program that includes both weight-bearing cardiovascular and strength training can help prevent bone loss and encourage bone growth.
- Select low-impact, weight-bearing activities such as walking, and other low-impact activities such as swimming, water exercise and cycling.
- Strength training helps to conserve bone mass and improve dynamic balance. Best results are generally seen from using relatively higher weight loads with fewer repetitions.
- Include a variety of exercises that stimulate as many different bones as possible.
- Start slowly and gradually progress the intensity and duration of your workouts.
- Aim to exercise at aerobically four times per week and strength train two to three times per week.

Exercise Cautions

- Modify exercises as needed to avoid bending forward and twisting the spine.
- Reduce anxiety and the risk of falling by avoiding unstable surfaces, keeping the exercise area free of hazards and using balance support (e.g., chair, wall) if necessary.
- Avoid impact if you have severe osteoporosis.
- If you have vertebral fractures, severe osteopenia or back pain, choose water-based activities such as swimming and water aerobics.

Your exercise program should be designed to maximize the benefits with the fewest risks of aggravating your health or physical condition. Consider contacting a certified health and fitness professional* who can work with you and your health care provider to establish realistic goals and design a safe and effective program that addresses your specific needs.

*If your health care provider has not cleared you for independent physical activity and would like you to be monitored in a hospital setting or a medical fitness facility, you should exercise only under the supervision of a certified professional. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has two groups of certified fitness professionals that could meet your needs. The ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) is certified to support those with heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. The ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) is qualified to support patients with a wide range of health challenges. You may locate all ACSM-certified fitness professionals by using the ProFinder at www.acsm.org.

For more information, visit www.exerciseismedicine.org or e-mail eim@acsm.org.

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