

# Exercise for Healthy Bones

## Physiotherapy Department

### Why is Exercise Important for my Bones?

Regular activity and exercise are very important for everyone, of all ages, to keep bones healthy. Bones become stronger (more dense) when extra strain, is placed through them. Bones stay strong if you give them work to do!

Exercise is one of the best ways to do this. It makes bones as strong as possible. This is important throughout life, especially in childhood and early adulthood when bones are developing. After the age of 35, bones naturally become less dense. Exercise greatly slows this process.



### Osteoporosis

Exercising at any age significantly reduces the risk of developing osteoporosis. This is a condition where bones become fragile, making them more likely to break, especially later in life. In the elderly, this can affect quality of life and life expectancy.

Exercise is important if you have osteoporosis, even if you have already broken a bone. It slows the rate of further bone density loss. It also improves balance, therefore reducing the chance of falling and breaking a bone.



Healthy bone

Osteoporotic bone



## What Exercise Should I Do?

The guidelines on page 3 explain which exercises everyone should do to keep their bones strong. Providing you follow the general principles, it doesn't matter which specific exercises you choose. The best exercises are the ones that you enjoy, so you will keep doing them! Any exercise should be started gradually at the right level for you, and done regularly.

## Weight Bearing with Impact

Weight bearing (standing up) exercise, with impact, is the most effective way to make bones strong. Choose higher impact exercises wherever possible. Swimming and cycling are great for general health, but are non weight bearing and low impact, so do not significantly increase bone strength.

Low impact	Moderate impact	High impact
Gentle walk	Brisk walk	Jumping / Skipping
Yoga	Jogging	Running
Pilates	Tennis	Basketball
Elliptical trainer	Dancing	Stamping feet

## Exercising if you have Osteoporosis

If you have osteoporosis, it is still important to exercise. Follow the guidelines on page 3, and make the following modifications:

- Avoid high impact exercises. Instead, choose low impact exercises.
- Avoid forceful or twisting movements of the spine.

Ask your healthcare provider if you need further advice.



## Exercise for Strong Bones

To keep your bones strong and healthy, you should do the following:

### Aerobic activity

At least 150 mins / week

- > Must be weight bearing
- > High impact wherever possible
- > Bouts of 10 mins or more, totalling 150 mins / week
- > Moderate to vigorous intensity
- > This means you should be able to talk, but not sing!

For example  
Brisk walking  
Tennis  
Basketball  
Couch to 5K

### Strength Training

At least 20-30 mins 2 days / week

- > Exercises for legs, arms, chest, back
- > Use body weight against gravity, bands, or weights
- > 8-12 repetitions per exercise
- > Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/> for ideas

For example  
Push ups  
Squats  
Lunges  
Body pump class

### Balance and Posture Exercises

10 mins 3 days / week

- > Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/> for ideas
- > Or try the exercises below:

For example  
Tai chi  
Pilates  
Yoga  
Dancing



Stand on one leg



Walk on tip toes

## Remember ...

- Exercise makes bones strong
- Be active and choose things you enjoy
- Start at the right level for you, and progress gradually
- Begin today!

## Further Information

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk) (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)

[www.theros.org.uk](http://www.theros.org.uk) (Royal Osteoporosis Society)

All exercise images provided with consent of [www.physiotec.ca](http://www.physiotec.ca)

## Further Information

We endeavor to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email [asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net](mailto:asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net). If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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**We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.**



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