



Benefits of Weight Bearing Exercise

Recent studies have shown that the risk of osteoporosis is lower for people who are active, and especially those who do load-bearing, or weight-bearing activities at least three times a week. How can exercise prevent osteoporosis? Muscle pulling on bone builds bone, so weight-bearing exercise builds denser, stronger bones. The more bone mass you build before age 25 or 30, the better off you will be during the years of gradual bone loss. Exercise can also help you maintain bone density later in life.

The best exercises for building bone are weight- or load-bearing exercises. **These include weight lifting, jogging, hiking, stair-climbing, step aerobics, dancing, racquet sports, and other activities that require your muscles to work against gravity.** Swimming and simply walking, although good for cardiovascular fitness, are not the best exercises for building bone. Thirty minutes of weight-bearing exercise daily benefits not only your bones, but improves heart health, muscle strength, coordination, and balance. Those 30 minutes don't need to be done all at once; it's just as good for you to do 10 minutes at a time.

Exercise Tips:

- ❑ Even if you do not have osteoporosis, you should check with your health care provider before you start an exercise program.
- ❑ Remember to warm up before starting and cool down at the end of each exercise session.
- ❑ For the best benefit to your bone health, combine several different weight-bearing exercises.
- ❑ As you build strength, increase resistance, or weights, rather than repetitions.
- ❑ Remember to drink plenty of water whenever exercising.
- ❑ Vary the types of exercise that you do each week.
- ❑ Combine weight bearing and resistance exercise with aerobic exercises to help improve your overall health.
- ❑ Bring your friend along to help you keep going or better yet, bring your family and encourage them to be healthy.
- ❑ Add more physical activity to your day: take the stairs vs. the elevator, park further away, and walk to your co-worker's office rather than e-mailing.

Put LIVE into action!

- L** - Load or weight-bearing exercises make a difference to your bones
- I** - Intensity builds stronger bones.
- V** - Vary the types of exercise and your routine to keep interested.
- E** - Enjoy your exercises. Make exercise fun so you will continue into the future!

Source: <http://ag.arizona.edu/maricopa/fcs/bb/exercise.html>

