Do you want to feel better, move better and sleep better? Experts now say that any physical activity counts toward better health – even just a few minutes!

People with osteoporosis or osteopenia (low bone mass) can reduce their risk of falls and fractures through the right kinds of physical activity. Research is ongoing to determine the best exercise plan for healthy bones. Currently, experts recommend weight-bearing activity (while on your feet) and strength training to help your bones become stronger and help prevent falls.

Getting Started

Keep It Simple
Sit less and move around more! Walk to the mailbox. Walk the dog. Dance in the kitchen. Take the stairs. Take opportunities to load your bones throughout the day.

Talk with Experts
Talk to your health care team before you start a new exercise program. What is your FRAX score? Have you had a fracture? Are there exercises you should avoid?

Build a Plan
Include both strength training and weight-bearing activities. A physical therapist (PT) or certified exercise professional with expertise in bone health can design a customized program for you.

Manage Your Risk
Get advice about other risk factors that affect your bones, such as nutrition (calcium, protein, calories), smoking, caffeine and alcohol intake. Take your prescribed medications.

Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.

Encourage the children and teenagers in your life to play sports, dance and do recreational activities they enjoy. Bone is most sensitive to loading during this time of life. They will build stronger bones to help protect them from developing osteoporosis later.
Weight-Bearing Activity

Weight-bearing activity helps load your bones to keep them strong and improves balance. Swimming and cycling are great for general fitness, but they are NOT weight-bearing. If you enjoy those activities, include other options where you’re moving on your feet (such as walking, marching, dancing, aerobics, tennis or, if approved, jumping/hopping).

**What?**
Repetitive-impact weight-bearing activity

**How often?**
4-7 days/week

**How hard?**
Moderate- to high-intensity depending on ability and bone/joint health

**How much?**
Start w/5 impacts. Gradually build up to 30-60 total impacts over the day
OR
Start w/5-10 minutes of weight-bearing activity – build up to 20-45 minutes/day.

Remember: There are many different ways to apply impact to bones. Start gently. Some people with painful conditions such as arthritis may never reach high-impact loading. But just being weight-bearing is important.

**Weight-Bearing Activity Tips and Cautions**

- Choose what kind of impact is best for you (low or high) with feedback from your health care provider and based on your overall/bone health, fitness level and joints. If you have arthritis in your knees or hips, focus more on strength training.
- Start with foot stomping or marching. Then progress to heel drops (go up on your toes and drop onto your heels). Begin gently to avoid injury. If approved by your health care provider, gradually build up to hops or jumps. Get expert guidance.
- If you have poor balance, hold onto stationary supports or try using walking poles.
- Give your body time to recover between sessions. Shorts bursts of challenging activity, followed by rest periods, are more effective than long slow sessions.
- Talk to your health care provider right away if activities cause bone pain.
Strength Training

Challenging your muscles can help to strengthen your bones. Strength training, particularly in your legs and trunk, plays an important role in preventing falls. You will also improve your ability to do daily and fun activities without injuring yourself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>How often?</th>
<th>How hard?</th>
<th>How much?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hand weights, resistance bands, weight machines or your own body weight (for example, chair sit-to-stands or kitchen counter push-ups)</td>
<td>2-3 days/week *Rest day in between</td>
<td>Start w/ 12 repetitions at light-medium effort. Gradually build to hard effort for just 8 repetitions.</td>
<td>8-10 repetitions for each major muscle group. After 2 weeks, increase to 2 sets.</td>
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Remember: Focus first on learning good technique - then increase resistance. Get help from a certified exercise professional or physical therapist. They can teach you the right way to do exercises and how to breathe properly.

Resistance Training Tips and Cautions

- For the most benefit to your bones, work up to challenging loads. When possible, do exercises standing instead of sitting.
- Change your routine every couple of months. Bones respond well to variety.
- Be cautious about exercises involving bending and twisting at the hips and trunk.

Balance

Balance activities improve your ability to resist forces that could cause you to fall. They also lower your risk of injury if a fall does happen. Simply getting stronger will help too, especially in your legs, stomach and back. Train in an uncluttered area and use a chair or wall for support if needed. A certified exercise professional can guide you safely through balance training. Here are some examples:

Standing stability
When standing, gradually reduce your base of support: 1] Stand with both feet together and hands on your chest. 2] Stand with one foot forward and the other back. 3] Stand-heel-to-toe. 4] Stand on one leg. Hold a position for 15-30 seconds.

Active challenges
**Other Types of Physical Activity**

These activity options are important for your overall health and may reduce your risk of falls or fracture.

**Aerobic Activity**
Aerobic activities such as walking, cycling or using an elliptical trainer are important for heart health and stamina. Do these activities for 30-60 minutes (preferably weight-bearing) at least 3 days/week at a moderate-intensity.

**Flexibility**
Stretch your muscles 5-7 days/week. Stretch to the point of feeling tightness. Hold for 10-30 seconds (30-60 seconds for older adults). For example, stretch your chest, thighs and calves to help your posture.

**Change it Up**
If your bones can handle it, activities with changes of speed and direction can be good, such as aerobic dance routines, tennis, pickleball, dancing or soccer. Ask your health care provider if these would be safe for you.

**Posture**
You can stand taller by doing exercises to strengthen your back and stretch your chest muscles. A PT or exercise professional can help you achieve muscle balance for better posture.

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**Get More Help**
To learn more about being active with osteoporosis or osteopenia, check out these websites:

Go to [acsm.org/get-stay-certified/find-a-pro](http://acsm.org/get-stay-certified/find-a-pro) to find an ACSM certified exercise professional near you.

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How will I get started this week?__________________________________________________________
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