

Martial arts training for elderly patients gets the green light

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Martial arts could be the key to helping osteoporosis sufferers fall more safely. A study published in the open access journal *BMC Research Notes* has found that martial arts training can likely be carried out safely.

Brenda Groen worked with a team of researchers from the Sint Maartenskliniek, Nijmegen, to study the effects of fall training in six healthy people. She said, "For obvious safety reasons, this could not be directly assessed using persons with [osteoporosis](#). Therefore, we measured the hip impact forces during the martial arts fall exercises in a group of [young adults](#). Based on our results, however, we believe that fall training would be safe for persons with osteoporosis if they wear hip protectors during the training, perform fall exercises on a thick mattress, and avoid forward fall exercises from a standing position".

Using a force platform, the researchers were able to measure the force of each fall and compare this to known information about the amount of impact a patient with osteoporosis can withstand. The falls taught in this study all involved turning a fall into a rolling movement by bending and twisting the trunk and neck, and it is possible for older people to learn these impact-reducing techniques. Groen concludes, "Since martial arts techniques reduce hip impact forces and can be learned by older persons, martial arts fall training may prevent hip fractures among persons with osteoporosis".

More information: Could martial arts fall training be safe for persons with osteoporosis? A feasibility study, Brenda E Groen, Ellen Smulders,

Jacques Duysens, Wim van Lankveld and Vivian Weerdesteyn, *BMC Research Notes* (in press), www.biomedcentral.com/bmcresnotes/

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