

Study says older people willing to boost bone strength with jumping exercises

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Older people would be willing to increase their bone strength in later life by doing exercises including jumping and hopping, new research from Bristol University has found.

The study, funded by the Medical Research Council award to Professor Jon Tobias in the Musculoskeletal Research Unit, found that if older people overcome the barriers to undertaking the exercises, they would be willing to undertake the type of exercises that are likely to increase their bone density and strength, which in turn could reduce their risk of falls or [bone fractures](#).

The researchers' paper was published in *Osteoporosis International*.

Lead researcher Dr Bethany Simmonds, from the School of Social and Community Medicine, said: 'Fracturing bones are painful for the individual and costly for the economy. Moreover, having a fracture or fall can be a turning point in an [older person's](#) life. It can lead to a loss of confidence, and a shift from being independent into being far more reliant on others and less able to do things for themselves.

'Our study found older people were worried about damaging their joints and falling over. However, if they were given the right information, and helped to understand how doing this type of [physical activity](#) could enable them to be independent for longer, most of the participants in this study said they would be willing to incorporate jumping activities into their daily lives.'

Previous research has already found that higher-impact physical activity, such as jumping or hopping, can increase [bone density](#) and strength in later life. Dr Simmonds said: 'We were interested in discovering the concerns older people had about this kind of exercise, and how those concerns could be overcome. It became apparent that older people were worried about damaging their joints and falling, but they also had difficulty conceptualising their bones.

'These findings showed the importance of providing clear, easy to follow information and guidance for older people when it comes to this sort of

exercise. Our results also suggest that if the activity is fun and interactive, they will be more likely to try it.'

The researchers also found that participants were interested in how participating in higher impact physical activity could maintain their mobility, independence and social relationships. This meant programmes incorporating higher impact physical activity, such as jumping in their home environment, needed to include well thought-out to help [older people](#) understand how this activity could have a positive impact on their lives.

More information: B. A. J. Simmonds et al. An exploration of barriers and facilitators to older adults' participation in higher impact physical activity and bone health: a qualitative study, *Osteoporosis International* (2015). [DOI: 10.1007/s00198-015-3376-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00198-015-3376-7)

Provided by University of Bristol

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