

# Participating in sports during childhood may have long-term benefits for bone health

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Participation in organized sport during childhood and adolescence is associated with bone mass at 20 years of age, according to a *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research* study.

In the study that followed 984 children into young adulthood, males who were 'consistent sport participators' from ages 5-17 years had significantly greater whole body and leg [bone mineral content](#) at age 20 years than those who dropped out of sport, whereas males who 'joined sports' had significantly greater leg bone mineral content than those who dropped out of sport. Females who were 'consistent sport participators' had significantly greater leg bone mineral content at 20 years of age than those who dropped out.

Because attainment of optimal peak [bone mass](#) in [young adulthood](#) is protective against osteoporosis later in life, participation in organized sport may have long-term skeletal benefits.

"Targeted messages to young males and females that discourage dropping out of sport and encourage joining sport—even in adolescence—are important for the benefits of skeletal health," said lead author Dr. Joanne McVeigh, of Curtin University, in Australia.

**More information:** *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research* (2018).  
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