

# Consumer health: Preventing osteoporosis

June 6 2023, by Laurel Kelly

---



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Osteoporosis affects approximately 10 million people in the U.S., 80% of whom are women, according to the Office on Women's Health.

Osteoporosis causes bones to become weak and brittle—so brittle that a fall or even mild stresses, such as bending over or coughing, can cause a fracture. Osteoporosis-related fractures most commonly occur in the hip,

wrist or spine.

Osteoporosis is a major cause of disability in older women. The disease affects men and women of all races. But white and Asian women, especially [older women](#) who are past menopause, are at highest risk.

Your bones are in a constant state of renewal—new bone is made, and old bone is broken down. When you're young, your body makes new bone faster than it breaks down old bone, and your bone mass increases. After the early 20s, this process slows, and most people reach their peak bone mass by 30. As people age, bone mass is lost faster than it's created.

## Prevention

Good nutrition and [regular exercise](#) are essential for keeping your bones healthy throughout your life.

A lifelong lack of calcium plays a role in the development of [osteoporosis](#). Low calcium intake contributes to diminished bone density, early bone loss and an increased risk of fractures. Men and women between 18-50 need 1,000 milligrams of calcium a day. This daily amount increases to 1,200 milligrams when women turn 50 and men turn 70.

Vitamin D improves the body's ability to absorb calcium and improves [bone health](#) in other ways. People can get some of their vitamin D from sunlight, but this might not be a good source if you live in a high latitude, if you're housebound, or if you regularly use sunscreen or avoid the sun because of the risk of skin cancer.

Exercise can help you build strong bones and slow [bone](#) loss. Exercise will benefit your bones no matter when you start, but you'll gain the most

benefits if you start exercising regularly when you're young and continue to [exercise](#) throughout your life.

Combine [strength training](#) exercises with weight-bearing and balance exercises. Strength training helps strengthen muscles and bones in your arms and upper spine. Weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, jogging, running, stair climbing, skipping rope, skiing and impact-producing sports, affect mainly the bones in your legs, hips and lower spine. Balance exercises, such as tai chi, can reduce your risk of falling, especially as you get older.

If you already have osteoporosis, you might think exercise will lead to fracture. However, using your muscles protects your bones. Certain types of exercise strengthen muscles and bones, while other types are designed to improve your balance, and that can help prevent falls. Consult your health care team before starting any exercise program, though. Because of the varying degrees of osteoporosis and fracture risk, your health care professional might discourage you from performing certain exercises.

©2023 Mayo Clinic News Network.  
Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Consumer health: Preventing osteoporosis (2023, June 6) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-06-consumer-health-osteoporosis.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
---