

Fall Prevention Measures

Falls are the #1 cause of death from injury among older adults. More than 200,000 people over the age of 65 will fall and break a hip this year.

Use this fall prevention checklist to see if you are doing everything possible to prevent falling. These are the important things we recommend you do to help prevent falls:

- Exercise at least 3 times per week
- Have your hearing tested regularly
- Have your vision tested regularly
- Take time to regain your balance after lying down or standing up after sitting
- Avoid wet or icy pavement
- Avoid rushing to answer the phone, cross streets, catch elevators or other activities
- Make sure hallways and stairs are well-lighted and free of clutter
- Have a grab bar on side of tub/shower and toilet
- Limit alcohol intake
- Use a cane, walker or walking stick if you feel unsteady on your feet
- Wear supportive, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes
- Avoid walking on uneven surfaces
- Keep a light or flashlight within easy reach of your bed
- Remove all throw rugs. Make sure other rugs are well anchored and smooth.

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Resources

The Role of Exercise in the Prevention and Treatment of Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis Society of Canada, Fact Sheet Series Number 2

Phone: 416-696-2663

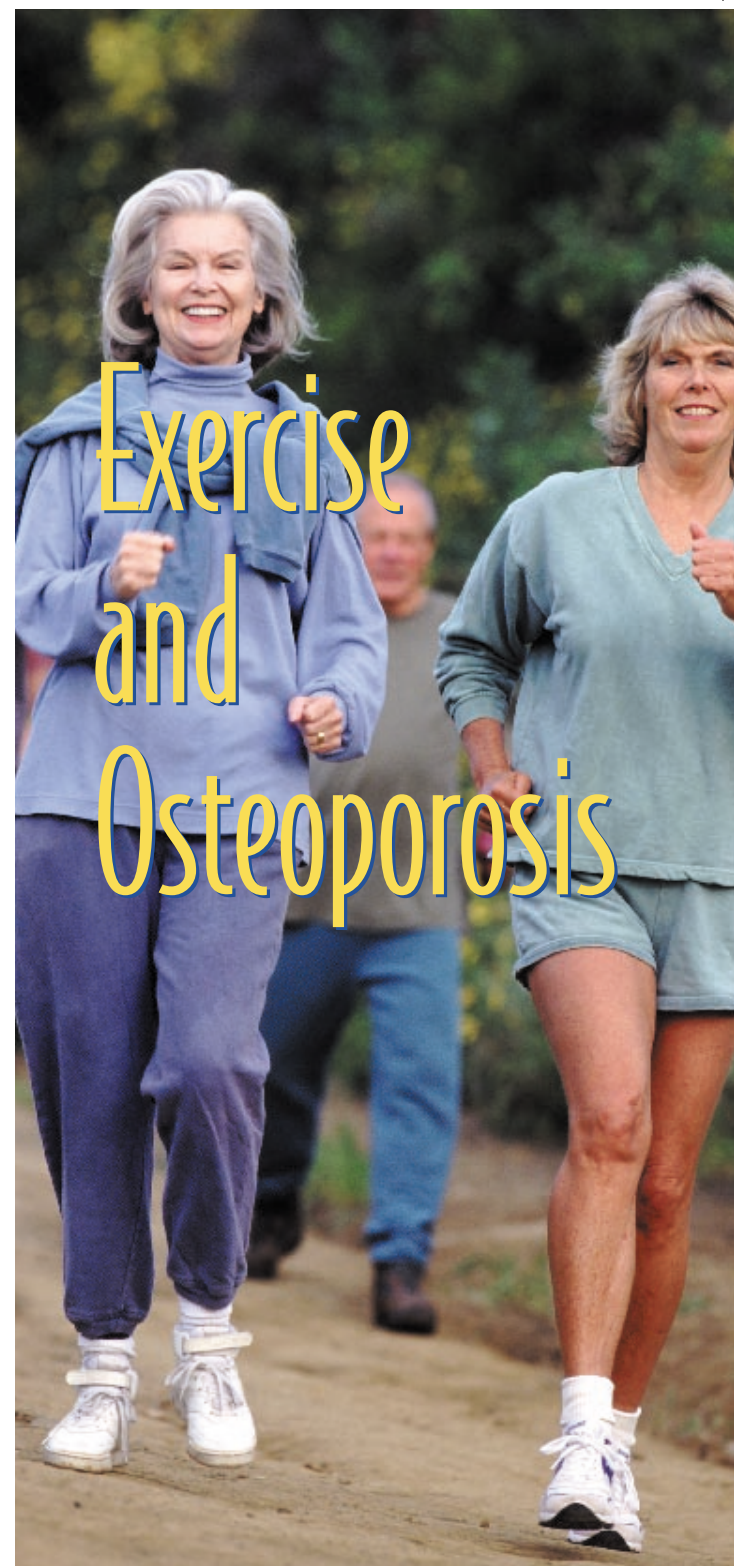
Web site: www.osteoporosis.ca

Boning Up

National Osteoporosis Foundation

Phone: 202-223-2226

Web site: www.nof.org



Brochure Developed by
**The Osteoporosis Education
 Task Force Endocrine Nurses Society (ENS)**
 Phone: 301-941-0249, Fax: 301-941-0259
www.endo-nurses.org

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Role of Exercise

Low bone mass caused by osteoporosis is a major risk for fracture. We now have medications to prevent bone loss and reduce fractures. However, even with medical therapy, people may continue to experience fractures due to falls and injuries.

While exercise may slow age-related bone loss in older individuals, the major goal of an exercise program is not to increase bone mass. Rather, the goals of exercise for individuals with osteoporosis are to:

- Increase muscle strength
- Improve balance
- Decrease risk of falling
- Reduce injuries
- Minimize symptoms
- Enhance physical function and well-being

The Best Kind of Physical Activity

The best type of exercise for reducing the rate of age-related bone loss is weight-bearing activity. Weight-bearing activities are those that require an individual to support their entire body weight. Walking is probably the most frequently recommended weight bearing activity. It requires no special skills or equipment and can be done almost anywhere by just about anyone, regardless of age. It is recommended that you walk at least half an hour, 3-5 times per week.

Other recommended physical activities include swimming, cycling, dancing, tai chi, and resistance training exercises. These muscle strengthening exercises may increase coordination and balance, reduce risk of falls, and help to maintain muscle mass, providing added protection in case of a fall. Consult your healthcare professional and get approval before beginning any exercise program. Ask your healthcare professional about a referral to a physical therapist who can design an individualized osteoporosis exercise program that blends balance, posture, endurance, flexibility and strength training.

Symptom Management

Back symptoms immediately following a spine fracture may range from mild to very severe pain. In addition to pain relieving medications, a physical therapy program of pain control measures including heat, ice, massage and exercises to stretch and strengthen the spinal muscles will bring long-term improvement in back pain by decreasing muscle tightness and the frequency of muscle spasms.

Once the fracture heals and the severe pain is gone, an individual often continues to feel chronic back symptoms. These symptoms are usually due to back and abdominal muscle weakness that leads to muscle fatigue and backache. Backaches can get worse with activities such as forward bending, standing or sitting for long periods of time. Back extension exercises for improvement of back strength are recommended. Improvement of muscle strength increases support of fragile bones and provides better posture. Stronger back muscles may help reduce curvature of the spine caused by multiple spine fractures. Flexion exercises (such as bending over at the waist) are not recommended.

The goals of a rehabilitative exercise program, under the direction of a physical therapist, for the relief of chronic back symptoms associated with osteoporotic spine fractures include:

- Decreased back ache and muscle tiredness
- Increased tolerance for daily activities
- Gradual return to an active lifestyle to improve sense of well-being

