How Exercise Helps Prevent Osteoporosis

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Strength Training for Osteoporosis

The best way to strengthen the spine is through exercise. Though diet is important, the right kind of exercise is the key to a healthy spine. Studies show that the right kind of exercise can increase bone thickness by ten percent compared to those who do not exercise at all.

Regular strength training for osteoporosis can protect you from breaking bones by improving your balance. Many people can't catch themselves when they fall as a result of poor balance. One study found that women with osteoporosis who regularly walked on treadmills showed increased balance. The bones in the spine and lower body help support your weight, so strength in these areas, improves balance.

Here are some exercises that are beneficial for strengthening your back:

- **Weight-bearing exercises.** Bone density increases with exercises that give the bones real work. Walking is a wonderful exercise as it is fully a weight-bearing activity. Aerobics, resistance-type exercises, and even mowing the lawn all can contribute to the exercise bones need to gain strength.
- **Calisthenics.** Do these for thirty to sixty minutes each session at least three times a day. Exercise that helps improve your movement is a great choice.
- **Combine weight bearing with resistance.** For the optimal workout, combine weight-bearing exercises with resistance training. This can include free weights, elastic bands, or nautilus equipment. These exercises will target the bone of the upper body and spine to offer strengthening in these neglected areas. Each exercise should be repeated between ten to twelve times. Working out three to four times per week is ideal, with rest days in between. Be sure to keep your neck and back properly supported when lifting any weight. Don't rush to add too much weight to the work out. Do enough to give yourself the resistance you need without straining or hurting yourself.

Things to Know

- Exercise has to be done on a regular basis for at least six months before bone density builds. If exercise is discontinued, the bone density gained will quickly be lost. Some exercises are not helpful for weak bones. Swimming offers no weight bearing so it will not help strengthen bones. Biking is the same, since you are just sitting and pedaling.
- Even though exercise can help strengthen your bones, do not stop taking your medication for osteoporosis. In fact, the two work together very well to ensure your bones get stronger, not weaker. It is imperative to stay active *and* remain on your medication.
- Your doctor may have recommended calcium for your bone health. If not, you may want to consider taking 1,200 mg of calcium per day along with 1,000 IU of vitamin D each day. Your bones will use these elements to rebuild.
- All in all, exercise does outweigh the risks. For a person with osteoporosis, being inactive will lead to multiple serious problems in the long run.