Quality of Life

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Don’t Let the Fear of Osteoporosis Affect Your Quality of Life

Fear is a powerful motivator. It can make people jump from a burning building to safety below. It can make people run into traffic to protect loved ones. The fear response is built into you for your protection and the protection of people around you.

When fear becomes too strong or chronic, problems begin to arise. Fear can isolate you and convince you that the outside world is a scary place filled with dangerous people and situations. Usually, the fears are irrational and based on anxiety rather than fact.

People with osteoporosis have a factor that compounds the trouble with fear and anxiety. Your fears and anxieties are based on real, tangible risks. A fall could lead to a break and being bumped at a festival or mall could end in multiple trips to the doctor.

Forget Fear

The goal is to find balance between the real fear and the anxious fear. If you can differentiate between the two, you will have a life filled with pleasurable experiences and positive supports rather than isolation and anxiety. Here’s how to gain some balance:

- **Make a list.** List as many pleasurable activities as you can. Activities that you currently do and ones that you have given up on. Consult online activity lists for extra ideas that you have not considered. Pay no attention to thoughts of practicality and only focus on what you would like to do.
- **Divide the list.** Separate your activities into three categories: Can-dos, Can’t dos and Maybes. The Can-do are activities that you feel comfortable doing in your physical condition. The Can’t-dos are ones that you believe to be too risky or unsafe and the Maybes are ones you are unsure about doing.

- **Seek feedback.** Encourage others to look at your lists as you review it yourself. Your doctor and a small group of trusted supports make a great team. Remember that your perceptions are going to be distorted by fear and anxiety so allow yourself to consider activities that your reviewers recommend.
- **Modify.** Now that you have a list of appropriate activities, take time to modify them so that they fit in with your lifestyle. If you really want to attend a baseball game but you worry that you may be bumped, make plans to go on a weeknight when the walkways will be clearer. Phone the stadium to ask about special accommodations or seats closer to entrances. Less steps means less risk.
- **Prepare yourself.** Modifications help to prepare the environment but preparing yourself is even more necessary. Don’t let anxiety and fear ruin your time. Practice some relaxation techniques before you leave or on your way to the activity. Visualizing yourself completing the activity and having a fantastic time is another useful tool. Anxiety leading to muscle tension can actually increase the risk of falls and injuries so find a relaxation technique that works for you. Stay optimistic to give yourself the best chance of success.

- **Go and do.** No amount of preparation can ever equal the positive effect of finding pleasure in an activity, especially one that you used to fear. These behaviors expand your comfort zone and make your world feel a little bit bigger.

Conclusion

With any chronic medical condition, like osteoporosis, quality of life should not take a back seat to quantity of life. Following the steps above can get you enjoying life in a safe and thoughtful way. What are you going to do today?