Osteoporosis and Mobility

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Coping With Mobility Impacted by Osteoporosis

Bones affected by osteoporosis are weak and frail, and therefore prone to fractures. The most common fractures occur to the hip and spine, leading to impaired mobility and loss of independence. Besides taking your medication and supplements as recommended by your doctor, you should consider having a fitness routine. Exercises are essential to keep your joints and bones mobile, improve balance and prevent fractures from falls. They also help with pain relief and improve your overall health and emotional well being. Before starting to exercise make sure you talk to your doctor to have your bone density and fitness levels assessed.

The Best Exercises to Stay Mobile and Prevent Bone Loss

You should follow a fitness plan that includes four types of exercise:

1. **Strength training** – involves free weights, weight machines or resistance bands, had been found to slow down the bone loss while keeping the joints, muscles and bones strong and mobile and improve your posture. These exercises should focus on your upper back and spine, because OP can cause compression fractures of the spine.
2. **Weight bearing exercise** - Weight bearing aerobic exercises such as walking, climbing the stairs or dancing work more on your lower body and improve mobility of the legs, hips and lower part of your spine. They are also great for your heart. Swimming and water exercises are recommended if you have advanced OP and you follow a rehab program.
3. **Flexibility** - Flexibility exercises aim to improve your mobility and balance, while preventing injuries. In this category are included the stretches performed during warm up and cool down periods. Make sure you perform these stretches safely, and avoid those stretches that involve bending at the waist level of flex the spine.
4. **Stability and balance** - Stability and balance exercises are great exercises to improve your mobility along with your balance and stability. Heel to toe walking, or standing on one leg with your eyes closed and many exercises used in Tai Chi and yoga are included in this category.

Medical experts also classify various exercises based on their osteogenic (bone forming tissue) imipact. Highly osteogenic (the best to promote bone growth and repair) exercises are tennis, dancing/gymnastic or basketball. Moderate osteogenic exercises include running, jogging, walking, resistance training and stair climbing.

Tips to Get the Most of your Fitness Plan

1. Find a fitness professional who has experience dealing with osteoporosis clients. Ask him to give you an individualized exercise plan to focus on improving mobility and prevent bone loss. See him regularly, as the amount of weight used, or the difficulty of the exercises may increase or vary over time to challenge your bones and muscles.
2. Exercise must be regular, at least 3 times a week. The variety in routine is better than repetition.

3. Regular short bursts of weight bearing exercises are preferred over long sessions. Rapid bursts of jumping are better than slow movements. If the exercise needs to be reduce it is better to cut down the length rather than the number of sessions performed each week.