

Exercises for Osteoporosis

Exercises for osteoporosis aim to:

- (a) strengthen bones
- (b) strengthen muscles
- (c) maintain good balance and posture

Exercises that are good for bones and muscles are those activities that are weight bearing. This is because these activities stress the bone and promote them to react by getting stronger. These weight bearing exercises can be graded into low, moderate and high impact.

You should aim to do a minimum of 30 minutes daily of low or moderate impact activity. You can split the time up into 10 minute portions if it helps.

Low impact: Examples are brisk walking, low impact aerobics, stair climbing.

Moderate impact: Jogging, power walking (brisk walking with vigorous arm movements and/or use of hand weights).

High impact: High impact aerobics, skipping, jumping exercises. For example, hopping up and down, about five inches off the floor, and landing flat footed, at least 15 times, daily.

If you have severe osteoporosis or have fractured a bone in the past, consult a doctor before embarking on these.

Other forms of exercise that are not weight bearing, such as cycling and swimming, do not directly strengthen bones, but can be useful in strengthening the muscles and helping with flexibility.

There is some discussion about the use of vibration platforms in the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis. These should be used with caution, and only after discussion with a physician who knows the background to your condition.

Weight training exercises, involving lifting light free weights help to strengthen bones and muscles and should be performed at least three times per week. It is advised that you get some instruction from a physiotherapist or personal trainer before embarking on these.