



**TIPS**  
FOR BETTER HEALTH

## MAINTAINING BONE AND JOINT HEALTH

We all lose bone mass and tend to become less flexible and active as we age. This, along with the onset of arthritis, can lead to pain or injury that causes us to become even less active. Here are some simple things you can incorporate into your daily life to help avoid problems.

### 1. EXERCISE

Thirty minutes of moderate, weight-bearing exercise (e.g., walking, jogging), ideally each day, decreases the incidence of osteoporosis. Also, consider adding in some moderate-resistance training, such as weight-lifting, swimming, or aqua-aerobics, which increase muscle strength while reducing stress on the bones and joints.

### 2. LOSE WEIGHT

If you are overweight, losing weight can significantly reduce the stress on your joints and prevent tears and cartilage breakdown. With every 10 pounds you lose, you reduce the stress on your knees by 30 to 80 pounds. It will also help improve your balance and reduce the risk of falling.

### 3. STRENGTHEN YOUR MUSCLES

Inactivity can lead to muscle stiffness and weakness. Strengthening the muscles around your joints, particularly the knees, also helps strengthen the bones and reduces the stress on your joints, in addition to helping to prevent the development of osteoarthritis. Muscle building is particularly key for menopausal women who tend to lose more muscle mass as they go through the change. This doesn't require a gym routine; using resistance bands and doing squats, wall sits, and lunges at home is equally effective.



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#### 4. EVALUATE YOUR SHOES

Wearing well-fitted, supportive shoes with absorbent soles during the course of your day can reduce the stress on the joints of your lower extremities. Often, just changing shoes can make a difference in the way you walk, and improve pain in feet, ankles, knees, and hips. Be sure to allow room for your toes to move without crunching, along with good arch support.

#### 5. STRETCH

Daily stretching exercises for your back and all of your joints helps to maintain flexibility, ensuring good range of motion and joint health. Strive to move gently in every direction, every day, including bending over, leaning back, and tilting side to side.

#### 6. CHANGE POSITIONS

Sitting or standing all day can put excessive pressure on joints, causing pain. Vary your routine to give your body and joints variety and rest periods. This will also help keep your body flexible.

#### 7. CHANGE YOUR DIET

Bones provide vital support for organs and muscles. Inadequate consumption of calcium can make bones weak and brittle, as well as increase the risk of osteoporosis, especially for women. Calcium is not produced naturally in the body, so it must be consumed through foods such as dairy products, nuts, dark-green leafy vegetables like spinach or broccoli, and foods fortified with calcium, including orange juice, soy, and tofu. Dairy also plays an important role by providing the vitamin D necessary to absorb calcium. Adults should consume 1,000 mg of calcium a day.

#### 8. GET TESTED FOR SUFFICIENT CALCIUM AND VITAMIN D ABSORPTION

Osteoporosis is often a result of a calcium or vitamin D deficiency. Check with your doctor to determine if your body is getting the recommended daily dose. Surprisingly, many people are not, as the use of sunscreen has increased, blocking vitamin D and effecting calcium absorption.

**These tips can help you stay stronger, longer. Try one or two, or incorporate them all into your life. Just a few small steps can keep you on your feet. If you'd like more information about our services or would like a referral to one of our ortho pros, call 800-216-5556.**

