

Exercise and Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones to the point where they break easily—most often in the hip, spine, and wrist. It is often called the “silent disease” because you may not notice any changes until a bone breaks.

Ten million Americans have osteoporosis. It is more common in women, but men also have this disease. The risk of osteoporosis grows as you get older. At the time of menopause, women may lose bone quickly for several years. After that, the loss slows down but continues. In men, the loss of bone mass is slower, but by age 65 or 70, men and women lose bone at the same rate.

The good news is there are things you can do at any age to prevent weakened bones:

- Eat foods rich in calcium and vitamin D.
- Include regular weight-bearing exercise in your lifestyle.
- Stop smoking.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink.

These are the best ways to keep your bones strong and healthy.

Your bones and muscles will be stronger if you are physically active. Weight-bearing exercises, done three to four times a week, are best for preventing osteoporosis. Walking, jogging, playing tennis, and dancing are examples of weight-bearing exercises. Try some strengthening and balance exercises too. They may help you avoid falls, which could cause a broken bone. **Go4Life** has sample exercises you can do anytime, anywhere.



Quick Tip

For more information, read the *Osteoporosis: The Bone Thief AgePage* at www.nia.nih.gov/health.

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- Try the sample workout.
- Read tips for adding physical activity to your day.
- Print useful tools.
- Share your exercise story.

