

Frail elderly

For very elderly people exercise is vital. Sometimes you need an individual assessment and a programme tailored to your health and lifestyle and where you live. The older you are, the harder it is for you to recover from a fall so keeping your muscles strong is important in helping reduce falls and maintaining your balance. Therefore any exercise programme should be combined with advice on preventing falls.



If you have osteoporosis

... then your bones are thin and breakable. However, even with osteoporosis it is falling down that usually causes broken bones. Increasing your fitness and balance will help prevent falls.

At any time in your life, if you have problems with becoming active, a physiotherapist can help.

How a physiotherapist can help.

- Develop an exercise programme for children or adults with health problems that prevent them joining in activities.
- Provide exercises and advice to help you maintain a good posture.
- Design a programme for the frail elderly to decrease the risk of falling.

Sometimes a physiotherapist will work as part of a health care team or when necessary refer you to another health professional.

If you would like help to get active ask your GP or practice nurse about Green Prescriptions (GRx). For more information call 0800 22 84 83. GRx is written advice to get active as part of your health plan.

New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists
PO Box 27 386, Wellington 6141
Tel 04 801 6500 Fax 04 801 5571
nzsp@physiotherapy.org.nz

www.physiotherapy.org.nz



PHYSIO THERAPIST

Osteoporosis
- activity
is the key
to prevention
and treatment



Osteoporosis is **not** an inevitable part of ageing.



OSTEOPOROSIS
NEW ZEALAND INC
Building a Stronger Future

Rongoā Kākāriki
GREEN
PRESCRIPTION

Preventing osteoporosis

There are important steps you can take all your life to avoid osteoporosis, including:

- Keeping active
- Ensuring your diet is calcium-rich.
- Maintaining adequate vitamin D levels throughout the year by either safe exposure to sun or supplementation.



Keeping active

The most effective activity to make your bones strong and keep them that way is “weight-bearing” exercise, when your muscles move against gravity – when you are on your feet.

Good examples of weight-bearing activities are:

- Jogging
- Fast walking
- Tennis
- Dancing

Swimming and cycling are both great forms of exercise for your general health and good for muscle strength. However they are not weight-bearing.

Children

We all probably reach our peak bone density when we are young adults (about 20-25 years). So encourage children and teenagers to be physically active. This should be an important part of the school curriculum.

Adults

It is important to continue being physically active as an adult.

Warning sign

Poor posture may indicate you are at risk of osteoporosis. Here is a simple test of your posture.

- Stand with your bottom touching a wall and with your heels 5cm from the wall.
- Stand up straight: chin tucked in, look straight ahead, shoulders pulled back so your shoulder blades touch the wall.
- Most of your upper back should be touching the wall; the back of your head may touch the wall.
- There should be a small hollow behind your neck and lower back.

If you cannot do this or it causes pain, discuss the difficulty with your doctor or physiotherapist who will be able to help you.

Older adults

As you get older you do lose bone mass, but exercise can reduce the rate of loss as well as improving your fitness and increasing your muscle strength and balance. Physical activity and a diet rich in calcium are particularly important for women after menopause, as bone loss increases at that time.

