



## Exercising for Bone Health

Bones require more than calcium, as we know, to be strong. Bone follows the same old saying that is "use it or lose it". Bones stressed through exercise are encouraged to increase calcium content and grow stronger and more dense. Our usual inactive lifestyle has the opposite effect on bone. Inactivity causes the bone to lose calcium and therefore weaken.

Any exercise is good because all exercise causes muscles to contract against the bone, which stresses or stimulates them. Weight bearing exercises are the best for bone, because both muscles and gravity stress the bones together.

Examples of weight bearing exercises include walking or hiking, running or jogging, aerobics, racquet sports, basketball, skiing - especially cross country, a ski machine, skating, weight training, and even household chores and yard work activities.

Adults need 1,000 to 1,500 mg of calcium daily. Dairy products, as everyone knows, are the best source of calcium. Green leafy vegetables are a good source and many foods, like orange juice, bread, and cereal are also fortified with calcium.

In women, estrogen helps calcium become incorporated into the bones. After menopause, as estrogen levels lower, calcium losses increase dramatically and supplements may be considered.

Too much exercise could actually be harmful, although this would be unusual in middle age or older adults. Young, highly competitive persons often are guilty of over exercising and could even precipitate a stress fracture by doing this.

Finding an activity that you like is the key. It must be suitable to your lifestyle. Most people will stick with an exercise program that they enjoy.

Walking, biking including stationary bike, cross country ski machine, or swimming are particularly effective exercises. Warm up is important and the workup should gradually be increased from 5 to 20 minutes. One would have to continue the activity at least three days per week. Strength or resistance training using free weights, weight machines or elastic tubing is very helpful for bone health as well.

If you feel tired or ache the day after exercising, you over did it. You should decrease the intensity or the duration of your exercise - or both. By slowly building up the exercise program, you will be more likely to stick with it and keep building stronger bones.

## Addendum

### THE MANY BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

As a person begins to get farther in to their exercise program many changes occur in physical well being and mental outlook. For example;



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1. Better sleeping habits and a more restful night.
2. Stress is reduced and a person's mood is elevated.
3. Muscle tone, strength and flexibility improve.
4. Possible reduction in heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and risk of stroke.
5. More positive self image.
6. Puts a person in a better frame of mind with a more positive outlook on life.

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**Please consult Dr. Haverbush or a physician for specific treatment recommendations.**

## **Thomas J. Haverbush, MD. P.C.**

**Office Address:  
315 E. Warwick Dr., Suite A  
Alma, Michigan 48801  
989-463-6092  
Fax 989-463-8914**

**Website Address:  
[www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com)**