

Keep your bones healthy



Cut down on salt, expose yourself to sunshine and exercise regularly for stronger bones, says orthopaedic surgeon Subhash Jangid

A healthy set of bones is vital for good posture, balance and strength. Our bones lose calcium and other minerals and become lighter, and more porous as we age. The following tips can prevent your bones from becoming porous.

Eat calcium-rich food:

The daily calcium intake of adults should be at least 700mg. For those diagnosed with osteoporosis, it should be 1,200mg. Include yoghurt, cheese, a handful of almonds and spinach in your daily diet.

Power of sunshine:

Your body needs Vitamin D to absorb calcium. This is found in fish oil, liver, fortified spreads, cereals, and egg yolk. Your body also makes its own Vitamin D when you are exposed to sunshine. Take in sunshine for 15 minutes two to three times a week.

Limit protein:

Excess intake of meat, cheese and protein drains the body of calcium and weakens bones. Your daily diet should contain a balanced portion of protein (meat, fish, egg, nuts and seeds), fresh fruits and vegetables, and carbohydrates (bread, pasta, potato and rice).

Quit smoking:

The more you smoke, the more likely you are to suffer from osteoporosis.

Cut down salt intake:

Salt speeds up the bodys loss of calcium. Most of us consume 9g of salt a day, but the recommended limit is 6g, or just a teaspoonful. Dont add salt to your food. Avoid foods that are high on salt like crisps, ham, cheese, sauces, and processed food like French pies, pizza and soup.

Be active:

Bones get stronger when you use them. The best way to strengthen them is to do five hours of weight bearing' exercise a week. This includes walking, running, dancing, golf, tennis or netball. It doesnt include cycling or swimming.

Drink sensibly:

Alcohol, tea, coffee, and other fizzy drinks cut the amount of calcium you absorb, and weaken the bones. Stick to the recommended amounts of alcohol, and swap your caffeine-rich drinks for water and diluted juice.

Maintain a healthy weight:

Losing too much weight too fast under a crash diet programme can increase the risk of osteoporosis. The same is true if youre anorexic. Weight loss can reduce the amount of oestrogen (a hormone that helps to protect your bones) in your body. If you need to lose weight, do it sensibly.

(send in your feedback to st.wellness@timesgroup.com)