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# Keeping Fit With **OPTM** Therapy

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## BUILD THOSE BONES

The health of our bones is a hot topic. How can we keep our bones strong and what makes them weak? Genetics determines about 80% of our bone structure, the remaining 20% can be controlled by diet and exercise. Currently, we have an epidemic of poor dietary and activity habits. We cannot change our genetics, but we certainly can take steps to improve our lifestyles, and quality of life. The health of our bones is essential to be comfortable in our daily lives.

**Osteoporosis** is the pathological loss of bone. It affects 28 million women and men over the age of 50. This was thought to be a disease that only affected menopausal women because of their lack of estrogen. But, everyone begins to lose bone, about 1% per year after the age of 30. This loss accelerates during menopause, to about 2-5% per year, and then resumes the 1% rate post-menopause. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, 1 out of 2 women and 1 out of 8 men will have an osteoporosis related fracture. What can be done about this crippling condition?

Recent studies have encouraging information regarding prevention and treatment for this prob-

lem. Small increases in bone structure can lead to a large change in bony strength, and can be achieved in convenient and short exercise sessions, performed 3-4 times per week. These exercises, combined with proper diet, and if necessary, medication, must become part of a lifetime activity program

Building bone mass during our youth can create a bone bank for later years. Activities that include running, jumping, tumbling and climbing are very good for bone growth stimulation, as are sports such as soccer, gymnastics, running, and dancing. Weight bearing activities, which load the skeleton in a variety of ways, are the most effective for building strong bones. Our skeletons need impact loading of 2-3 times body weight to be stimulated to adapt and grow.

As we age, our bones continue to need this stimulation. Rope jumping, jumping down from a 6-inch high box, weight lifting and walking with a weighted fanny pack are examples of beneficial activities. Gradually building up to these activities may be necessary, especially if you have been diagnosed with osteoporosis or osteopenia. Building strength and balance will also help to prevent falls, which may lead to fractures.

Nutrition plays a vital role in the health of our skeleton. We must have sufficient amounts of calcium, vitamin D and magnesium for strong bones, and the limitation of sugar, caffeine and phosphorous should be observed.

Osteoporosis is a diagnosis often received with great distress. Early diagnosis and appropriate medical and lifestyle management can reverse this condition and improve your resistance to fractures. At **OPTM**, we are skilled in guiding you through a program that will safely improve the health of your bones.



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