

5 Bone Health Tips for a Super Skeleton

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While osteoporosis is uncommon in adults aged 20 to 50, don't wait until your golden years to think about bone health. Here are 5 basic tips you can do today to help strengthen your skeleton:

1. Eat calcium-rich foods: dairy products (cheese, milk, yogurt), seeds, sardines, figs, canned salmon, beans and lentils, almonds, whey protein, leafy greens (like broccoli, spinach and kale), and rhubarb. Fortified foods (like cereal, almond milk, oatmeal, bread, etc.) can be a good sources of calcium.

For adults ages 19 to 50 and men ages 51 to 70, the recommended dietary allowance is 1,000 milligrams (mg) of calcium a day. The recommendation increases to 1,200 mg a day for women after age 50 and for men after age 70.¹

2. The body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. Good sources of vitamin D include oily fish (tuna and sardines), egg yolks, fortified milk and sunlight. Ask your doctor about the appropriateness of vitamin D supplements.
3. Exercise: the body needs it to stave off osteoporosis. Weight-bearing exercise, like walking, running, tennis, climbing stairs, etc., will help make bones stronger and promote heart health, too.

4. Quit smoking, or don't start. Research suggests that tobacco contributes to weak bones and the development of osteoporosis.² You already know that smoking is also ruinous to the heart, circulatory system and the lungs. Second-hand smoke is bad news, too. So toss those ciggies.
5. Avoid drinking more than two alcoholic drinks a day. Alcohol can interfere with the body's ability to absorb calcium. Too much booze also increases the risk of falling and other accidents.

Bonus bone health tip: Certain medications can damage bones.³ This includes long-term use of steroid medications and some drugs used to treat breast cancer, anti-seizure meds and proton pump inhibitors. If you take these medications, ask your doctor what you can do to keep your bones healthy.

¹[Mayo Clinic](#), "Bone Health: Tips to Keep Your Bones Healthy"

²[NIH National Resource Center](#), "Smoking and Bone Health"

³[WebMD](#), "Do Your Medications Affect Your Bones?"

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