

Bone-Building Exercises

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD

The saying “use it or lose it” applies not only to your muscles, but also to your bones. Do the following activities to maintain bone mass and prevent osteoporosis.

Weight-bearing exercises:

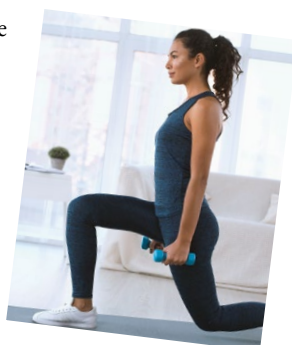
The stress these exercises place on bones stimulates bone formation and repair. Jogging, brisk walking with or without weights, stair climbing, step aerobics, racquet sports, and dancing are excellent activities for promoting stronger bones. Aim to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise every week.



Resistance training: The pull of muscle against bone signals your bones to get stronger and denser. Weight-lifting machines, free weights, calisthenics and resistance bands are popular options. Include two to three sessions each week of at least moderate-intensity strengthening exercises of all major muscle groups.



Balance activities: They can improve your balance and prevent falls. Walking on an unstable surface, such as a wobble board or foam mat, can help. So can shifting your body weight backward and forward while standing with both feet together or on one foot. Step-ups, lunges and walking backward are other ways to improve your balance.



Consult your health care provider before increasing your level of exercise; ask if any physical activities are unsafe for you. Then get moving for healthier bones.

The Truth About Weight Loss Supplements

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



Many weight loss products promise more than they can deliver. Those that “guarantee” fast weight loss may be hard to resist. Do they deliver what they promise? And are they safe?

All dietary supplements, including those promising weight loss, are consumed by mouth and are not pharmaceutical medications. Common ingredients are vitamins, minerals, fiber, caffeine, herbs and other plants. They may claim they can build muscle or burn fat, but they are not a cure-all for overweight and obesity.

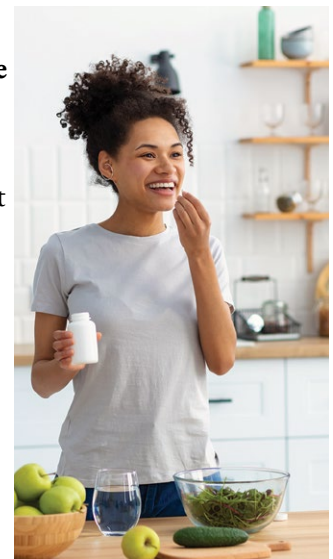
While dietary supplements don't require approval by the FDA, if a supplement is found to be unsafe, the FDA can issue warnings or request it be withdrawn from the market. The FDA can also act against companies that make false or unsupported claims to sell their supplements.

Dietary supplement manufacturers rarely carry out clinical trials on these products. As a result, we have little scientific evidence to show that they work to aid weight loss.

Interactions with your medicines? Some supplements can cause problems if taken along with certain medicines. For example, antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E, might make some chemotherapy medicines less effective. Taking many different supplements can increase the risk of side effects, especially when taken with medications.

Research your weight loss supplement before buying. Check credible websites, such as those run by the U.S. Office of Dietary Supplements and the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. Also keep in mind that the FDA doesn't regulate supplements.

Always consult your health care provider before taking any supplement. This is especially important if you have health problems, take prescription medications or are pregnant or breastfeeding. Your provider may prescribe a supplement if you have a vitamin or mineral deficiency.




TIA: Warning Strokes

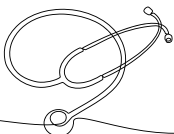
A TIA (transient ischemic attack) happens quickly, causing stroke-like symptoms. TIAs can cause weakness or numbness on one side, vision disturbances, a severe headache, and difficulty speaking. These symptoms result from a temporary blockage of blood flow to the brain due to a blood clot which quickly dissolves or moves.

TIA symptoms often disappear in a few minutes (although they can last up to 24 hours). But the quick return to feeling normal after a TIA doesn't mean the episode should be ignored. While a TIA doesn't cause permanent damage, it's a warning that a full-blown stroke could be ahead.

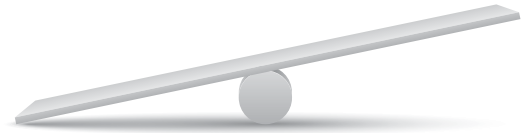
In fact, nearly one in five people who have a TIA suffer a stroke within 90 days, according to the American Stroke Association. What's more, when people who have experienced TIA symptoms are given appropriate imaging tests, scans reveal about two in five have had strokes instead of TIAs.

 Call 911 immediately if you have TIA symptoms or head to an emergency room. When possible, a comprehensive evaluation, including imaging of blood vessels in the head and neck, should be done within 24 hours of a TIA. A neurologist will use these, other tests, and your health history to assess your risk of a future stroke.

Good news: You can work with your health care provider to lower the risk of a future stroke by treating high blood pressure, controlling blood sugar if you have diabetes, keeping weight under control and not smoking.



Balance Lessons



Balance is key to performing your best at almost anything. Whether you're playing sports, reaching for an item on a grocery shelf or just walking, balance is involved. It's your ability to manage your center of gravity, and stay upright — and it involves not only coordination between your muscles, but with your eyes and brain, too.

Whether you walk daily, hit the gym regularly to lift weights, or admit to being a couch potato, there are some simple but effective ways to improve balance. Harvard University balance experts advise using a few of these exercises two or three times a week for best results:

- **Practice standing on one leg.** When you feel unsteady, switch to the other side. Repeat several times, until you feel muscle fatigue.
- **Stand up from a seated position using your legs only, not your hands.** Repeat two to three times.
- **Walk heel to toe in a straight line.** You will likely only be able to walk a short distance at first before you feel off kilter. With practice, balance will improve.
- **Take yoga or tai chi lessons.** Both forms of exercise involve balance and stability.
- **Bicep curls for balance.** For a more challenging balance exercise, stand with feet apart. Hold a dumbbell in one hand while you lift the opposite leg off the floor, bent back at the knee, for a few seconds. Repeat with the other side.

If you have severe balance problems, or an orthopedic condition, talk to your health care provider before starting any new exercise routine.

If your posture needs improving, get moving. Harvard experts note posture can be improved with a few simple, regular balance-specific workouts that build core strength and loosen tight muscles. Pilates and yoga are examples that can help.



Ease Sunday Night Anxiety

By Eric Endlich, PhD



Sunday night should come and go like any other night of the week, but for many people, it's the occasion for the Sunday scaries. This spike in anxiety, often affecting sleep and moods, may be triggered by:

- Dread of returning to work or school on Monday.
- Worries about being able to complete tasks well or on time.
- Feeling overwhelmed by weekday demands.
- Weekend behaviors, such as sleeping late, or heavy eating or drinking, that may hamper readjustment to the weekday schedule.
- Brainstorm solutions if you are concerned about a valid issue; if your worries are groundless, distract yourself with engaging activities.
- Avoid checking work-related messages on Sunday night, if possible.
- Prepare your lunch, select your outfit and map out your schedule in advance.
- Stay active, eat nutritious meals and try something calming (e.g., yoga, meditation or a nature walk) over the weekend.
- If you need help, consult your health plan, employee assistance program or health care provider for a psychotherapy referral.

To prevent this pattern from repeating week after week, here are some strategies to help get your anxiety under control:

- Give yourself things to look forward to on Sunday night and Monday morning.
- Go to bed early enough to ensure that you can sleep seven to nine hours by Monday morning.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Take the Pressure Off**, is at personalbest.com/extras/24V5tools.

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