

Which Form of Exercise Is Best for Strong Bones?

When it comes to exercise, bones and muscles respond the same way: they get stronger when you make them work. Consider these types of exercises, recommended by the National Osteoporosis Foundation and the Arthritis Foundation, to build and maintain strong bones:

Weight-bearing, high impact exercise: Can be useful for people with normal bone mass and healthy joints	Cross-country skiing Dancing High-impact aerobics Hiking Jogging/running Jumping rope Stair climbing Tennis
Weight-bearing, low impact exercise: Can be useful for people who cannot do, or prefer not to do, high impact exercise	Elliptical training Low-impact aerobics Walking
Resistance and strength training: Properly performed, can be useful for any adult	Lifting weights Lifting your own body weight Using elastic exercise bands Using weight machines

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends the following minimum levels of exercise for substantial health benefits to active and older adults:

- 150 minutes per week of moderate aerobic exercise (or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise)
- PLUS muscle-strengthening activities at least 2 days per week

Activity can be done in episodes of at least 10 minutes duration. The guidelines can be met in many ways.

To protect your bone health, you may also want to consider non-impact exercise that challenges your balance, improves your posture, or helps you carry-out everyday tasks. Tai chi, yoga and pilates are just a few examples. For heart health, non-impact activities like bicycling, swimming or water exercise are also helpful.