

Maintaining Strong Bones

by Shoshanna Katzman



For many, it is difficult to imagine that their bones will ever be anything but super strong, although as the aging process progresses this is not always the case. Several factors contribute to the weakening of bones such as a sedentary lifestyle with improper diet compounded by the depleted mineralization of our soil.

This results in the loss of calcium and other essential minerals thereby weakening bone structure. In the worst-case scenario, this leads to osteoporosis, possibility of debilitating fractures and the rude awakening that one's bones are hindering ability to continue daily life activities.

Osteoporosis is more common for women and affects approximately 200 million women throughout the world. It is thus prudent to put preventative measures in place as early as possible as: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". Western physicians recommend weight-bearing exercise, a balanced diet containing calcium rich food or in some cases calcium supplementation. When appropriate, they prescribe periodic testing of bone mineral density (BMD) particularly for women over 60 and men over 70 years of age. Western pharmaceuticals are also available as a promising treatment for osteoporosis.

Chinese medicine informs us that our bones are connected to the energetics of our kidneys. Receiving acupuncture treatments and taking Chinese herbals targeting kidney enhancement is thus a mainstay of this ancient paradigm. Engaging in the practice of Taiji for its weight-bearing benefit and the bone marrow cleansing Qigong exercises also strengthen kidney energy.

Chinese medicine, furthermore, offers suggestions for choosing foods and drinks which build rather than deplete energetics of the kidney meridian system. Enhancement of body nutrition through Western herbs high in mineral content and nutraceutical supplementation is another viable approach.

Dietary recommendations for continued support of bone health include reduced consumption of red meat as it is thought to leech calcium from the bones. Sardines with bones and other seafood, such as salmon and tuna are good options. Eating plenty of

organic fruits is essential such as bananas which contain potassium along with strawberries and blueberries as they are high in antioxidants that combat oxidative stress.

Additional bone strengthening basics include organic vegetables such as the calcium rich green leafy kale, spinach, collard greens and bok choy. Be sure to include sea vegetables such as nori, kelp, kombu and wakame as they are filled with trace minerals such as calcium, phosphorous, magnesium and iron. Eating prunes is, furthermore, recommended for increasing bone mineral density.

Qigong exercise where you sit quietly and visualize your bones breaking down and rebuilding in equal proportion. Establishing overall health is another essential key to maintaining bone strength. Continually working toward keeping our bodies from becoming physically run down, keeping qi flowing throughout our energetic body and nourishing our spirit results in a strong, vibrant and energized vehicle to support us to effortlessly move through life.

Maintaining proper functioning of the vital organs, maximizing brain function and optimizing health of the cardiovascular, immune, reproductive, circulatory and nervous systems through balanced lifestyle, stress management, regular exercise and proper rest and sleep are basic components of any health program.

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