



Bone and joint health

Healthy ageing

Maintaining healthy bones and joints is especially important as you get older. Ageing causes changes in your bones, joints and muscles, such as stiffer joints and loss of bone density.

Here are some things you can do to maintain your bone and joint health so you can keep moving well as you age.

Stay active

Regular weight-bearing, strength or resistance training and balance exercises can support your bone health, improve bone strength and reduce the rate of bone loss.

Exercise is also a great way keep your joints mobile and flexible, which helps to reduce the risk of falls.

Visit the [Healthy Bones Australia](https://www.healthysbonesaustralia.gov.au) website to learn different exercises that will help you maintain bone strength, including weight-bearing exercises.

Prevent falls

As you get older, changes to your eyesight, balance, reaction times and concentration can contribute to falls. Conditions such as vertigo can also increase the risk of falls.

There are many ways to prevent falls and reduce your chance of injury. For example, you can:

- stand up slowly after lying down or sitting
- make sure you are steady before walking
- be physically active every day
- have your eyesight and glasses checked at least once every two years.

You can also:

- take extra care on stairs
- remember not to stand on chairs or ladders
- choose comfortable, flat shoes with good grip
- make your home safer to move around in (e.g. install rails and remove rugs).

Have bone health checks

There are different tests to check your bone health. If you are over 50 and have risk factors for low bone density (osteoporosis), your doctor may give you a referral to get a bone density scan ('DXA scan'). Blood and urine tests may also be used to check your calcium, vitamin D and other markers for bone health.

Get enough calcium and vitamin D

Make sure you have enough calcium and vitamin D in your diet.

Calcium helps strengthen your bones. You need to get calcium from your food. Search online for the Healthy Bones Australia 'Calcium Content of Common Foods' guide.

Vitamin D helps your body absorb and retain calcium. Your body produces vitamin D when your skin is exposed to sunlight. Vitamin D3 can also be found in certain foods, such as fatty fish and eggs.

Manage pain

There are different ways you can relieve joint and muscle pain. For example, you can:

- do light exercise and gentle stretching
- use hot and cold packs
- practise relaxation techniques (e.g. breathing)
- look after your emotional wellbeing.

Depending on your situation, your doctor may recommend different medicines as part of your treatment plan.

When to see your doctor

If you have ongoing joint or bone pains that impact your daily life, or if you have had falls, talk to your doctor.

If you have a family history of bone and joint problems (e.g. osteoporosis or arthritis) talk to your doctor about how you can reduce your risks of developing these conditions.

For more information, resources and references, visit jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/healthy-ageing.



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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

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