

## Posture Exercises

Good posture includes keeping your ears over your shoulders, your shoulders over your hips, your hips over your knees and your knees over your ankles. By stretching and strengthening the muscles in your upper body, abdominals, back and lower body, posture exercises can help you limit curvature of your spine and decrease the risk of breaking bones in the spine. If you have rounded or “sloping” shoulders, you should focus on posture exercises.

Some examples are exercises that stretch the front of the shoulders, upper back (except for forward bending exercises), hips and knees. Exercises that strengthen the upper back, abdominals and legs can also improve posture.\*

## Functional Exercises



Functional exercises are similar to the activities you do each day. By helping you move safely during your daily activities, these exercises can help reduce your chance of having a fall and breaking a bone. If you have trouble performing daily activities, such as getting up from a chair or climbing stairs, you should

do functional exercises. If you have recently been inactive due to a broken bone, surgery, an illness or other reason, you may also benefit from these exercises.

Some examples are heel raises, climbing stairs and chair rises.\*

## Safety First

To develop a safe exercise program, you may need to work with a physical therapist (PT). Many individuals with advanced osteoporosis should not lift more than 10 pounds. Some people may be able to get clearance from their healthcare provider to lift more. A PT can also teach you balance, posture and functional exercises.

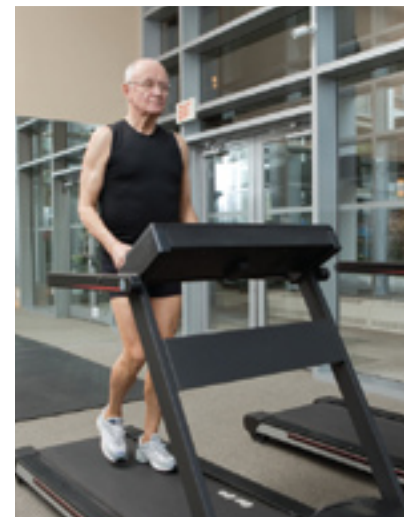
Your local fitness or community center may offer tai chi and other exercise classes. Some exercise examples are also available from NOF on our Web site at [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org) or by calling NOF at (800) 223-9994.

*\*Due to the length of this brochure, specific exercise instructions are not included.*



[www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org)  
(800) 223-9994

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## Exercise for Healthy Bones

Your bone is living tissue that responds to exercise by becoming stronger. Exercising regularly can help you stay strong, prevent falls and improve your overall health.

Two important types of exercises for your bones are weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises.

## Weight-Bearing Exercises

Low-impact and high-impact weight-bearing exercises are activities that make you move against gravity while you are upright. Some examples of high-impact weight-bearing exercises are jogging and aerobic dancing. If you have osteoporosis in your spine or hips, low-impact weight-bearing exercises such as fast walking, low-impact aerobics and dancing may be safer choices. Swimming and bicycling are not weight-bearing exercises, so they do not help your bones as much. Try to do weight-bearing exercises for about 30 minutes per day, 5 - 7 days per week.

Weight-Bearing Exercises	
Low-Impact	High-Impact
Fast walking (outside or on a treadmill)	Aerobic dancing
Low-impact aerobics	Hiking
Elliptical training machines	Jogging or running
Stair-Step machines	Jumping rope
	Racquet sports

## Muscle-Strengthening Exercises

Muscle-strengthening exercises include activities where you move your body, a weight or some other resistance against gravity. They are also known as resistance exercises. Examples include lifting weights, using weight machines, lifting your own body weight or using elastic exercise bands.

A well-rounded exercise program should work the muscles in your arms, back, legs, hips and abdomen. Muscle strengthening exercises should be done 2 - 3 days per week.

Most healthy adults should do one or two sets of 8 - 10 repetitions for each exercise. If you lift a weight 10 times in a row and stop, you have completed one set of 10 repetitions. If you can't do 8 in a row, the weight or resistance is too heavy. If you can do more than 10 - 15 in a row, you may need to increase the weight.

If you have osteoporosis or are frail, it may be safer to do 15 - 20 repetitions with a lighter weight. Make sure to learn proper form to achieve the greatest benefit and avoid an injury.

If you have osteoporosis in your spine or have broken a bone in your spine, be sure to avoid any movements that require you to bend forward from your waist or round your spine. Examples include doing toe-touches, sit-ups or abdominal crunches. It's also important to avoid full twisting motions or lifting a load that is too heavy for your fragile spine.

In addition to weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises, you may want to include balance exercises, posture exercises and functional exercises in your exercise program.

## Balance Exercises

Balance exercises can help you reduce your chance of falling, which also decreases your risk of breaking a bone. Balance exercises are especially important if you have fallen during the past year or if you lose your balance while doing your regular daily activities.



Tai chi is a type of exercise that can improve balance and decrease the risk of falls. Leg strength training exercises can also improve balance. Other examples include standing with one foot in front of the other as if on a tight rope; standing on one leg; or sitting on an unstable surface, such as a stability ball (see photo). When you do these exercises, you should feel wobbly, but not as if you could fall. If you think you could lose your balance, do the exercises with someone who can help you keep your balance.\*