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Do-It-Yourself Health: Bone Health, October 2018

 Health & Wellness

By **Lauren Skundrich**

October 1 2018

You have **about 206 bones** in your body — but how often do you think about bone health? The good news is that some of the same habits that are part of **living a healthy lifestyle can also promote bone health** and help reduce the **risk of osteoporosis, a progressive bone disease**.

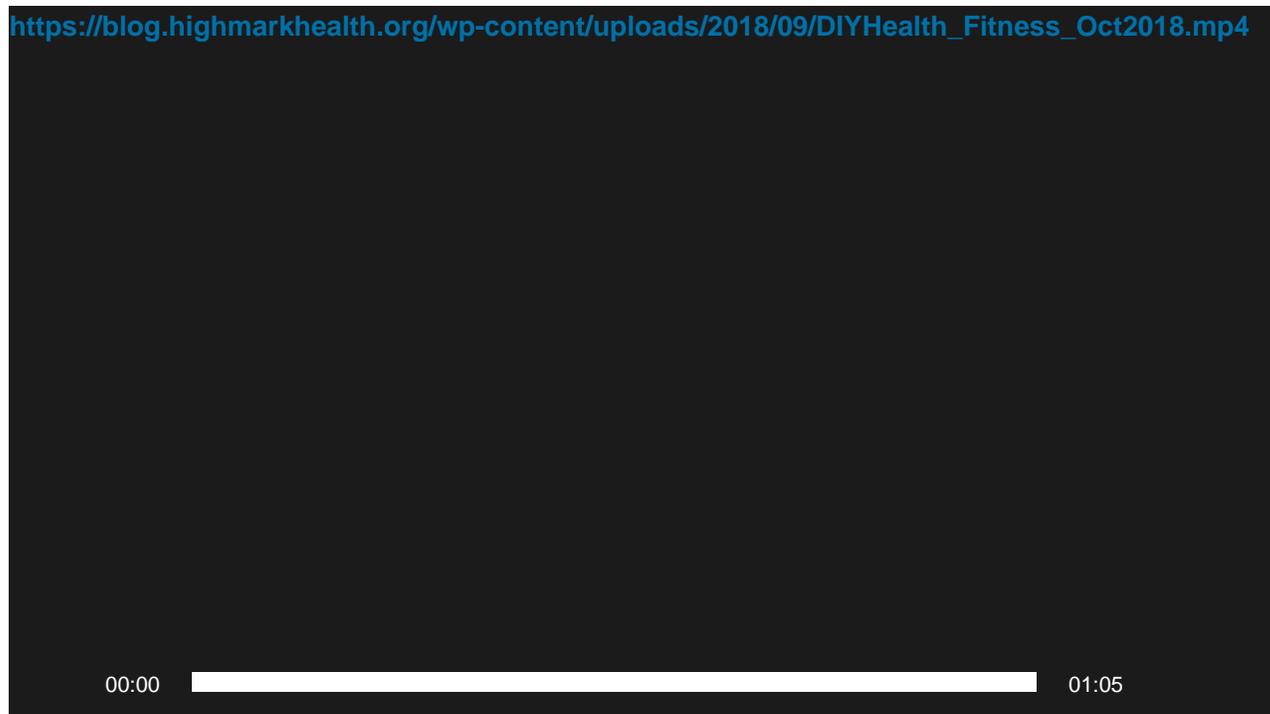
As you age, the risk of developing osteoporosis increases, which can then also increase the risk of falls and fractures. You can't control getting older of course, so let's focus on tips to keep your bones healthy that you *can* control!

Do Weight-Bearing Exercise

Fitting exercise into your schedule is always a good idea; for bone health, make sure you include **weight-bearing exercise**. Strength training is the obvious example of weight-bearing exercise, and has the added bonus of conditioning the muscles and tendons that support your bones. But that's not the only option. Depending on your fitness level, weight-bearing exercise can also include high-impact exercise like hiking, running, dancing or **plyometrics**, and low-impact exercise such as using an elliptical, recumbent bike or walking.

Any **weight-bearing exercise can help strengthen bones** and slow bone loss. Check out **this month's Move for Health handout** and the video below for some exercises you can do pretty much anywhere!

https://blog.highmarkhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/DIYHealth_Fitness_Oct2018.mp4



Low to High Woodchop

Squat to Press

Reverse Lunge, Pass, Row

Push-up

Walk, Jog, Run or Do the Stairs! (not shown)

Quit Tobacco

Several research studies have **linked tobacco use to decreased bone density and a greater risk of osteoporosis and bone fractures**. Of course, decreasing your risk for osteoporosis is just one of the *many benefits of quitting tobacco!*

Limit Your Intake of Alcohol and Soda

As the Mayo Clinic explains, **alcohol puts a “double whammy” on your bones**, interfering with the body’s bone-building process while also accelerating bone loss. Be good to your bones, and the rest of your body, by following the standard moderation guidelines — no more than one drink a day for women and men over 65, no more than two drinks a day for men under 65.

The **link between drinking soda and osteoporosis** is a little less certain. Most sources now agree that phosphorous and

carbonation are not likely to impact bone health. However, many sodas contain caffeine, and getting too much caffeine can interfere with calcium absorption and cause bone loss. Drinking a lot of soda may also mean you're not drinking other beverages, like milk or calcium-fortified juices, that would benefit your bones.

Know Your Family History

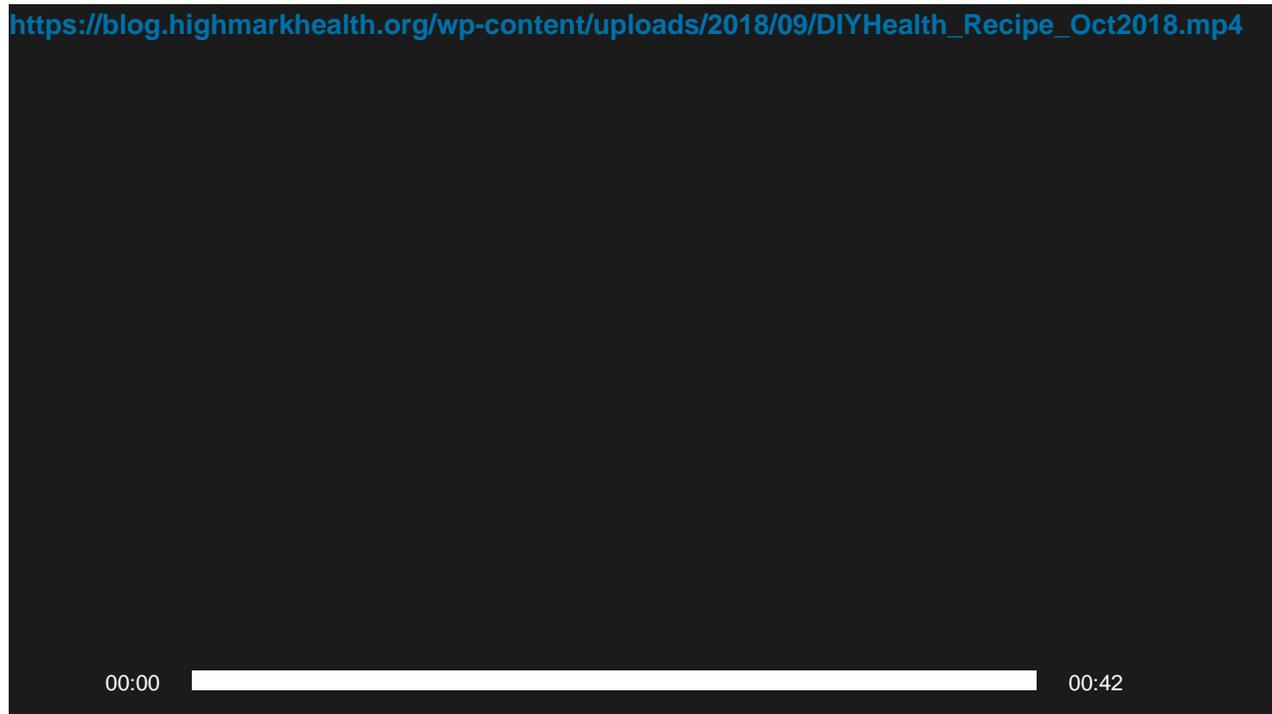
While you can't control your genetic risk of developing osteoporosis, knowing that the risk exists in your family enables you to talk to your doctors, so they can assess your risk, recommend testing, and give you additional steps you can take to offset your increased genetic risk.

Eat Foods Rich in Calcium, Vitamin D, Magnesium and Potassium

Most of us are familiar with the idea of getting plenty of calcium and vitamin D to support healthy bones. Choosing low-fat dairy products as well as dark leafy greens will help you meet the daily recommended allowance of calcium (which is somewhere between 1000-1200 mg). However, it's also important to eat a diet **rich in magnesium and potassium**. Low magnesium levels may lead to issues with vitamin D balance, which can interfere with calcium absorption. And potassium acts to neutralize calcium leaching acid in the body.

To help you get the "big four" for bone health, check out [this month's grocery list and recipes](#). Adapted from [EatingWell.com](#), these five recipes are rich in bone-supporting nutrients!

https://blog.highmarkhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/DIYHealth_Recipe_Oct2018.mp4



[Roasted Veggie Brown Rice Lunch Bowl](#) (adapted from EatingWell.com)

[Cauliflower Fried Rice with Chicken and Veggies](#) (adapted from EatingWell.com)

[Spaghetti Squash with Broccoli](#) (adapted from EatingWell.com)

Fruity Breakfast Smoothie Bowl (adapted from EatingWell.com)

Cheesy Scalloped Sweet Potatoes (adapted from EatingWell.com)



Tags: [bone health](#), [DIY Health](#), [Do It Yourself](#), [employer resources](#), [fitness](#), [healthy eating](#), [healthy recipe](#), [nutrition](#), [osteoporosis](#)

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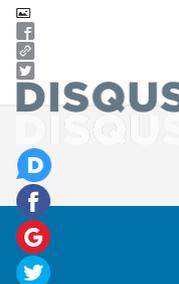
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