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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Exercise and Osteoporosis

Did you know that about 1.4 million Canadians (one in four women and one in eight men) currently have osteoporosis?

Did you know that there are approximately 25,000 hip fractures in Canada each year and seventy percent of these are osteoporosis related?

Did you know that 20% of these cases eventually result in death, while 50 percent of those who survive are permanently disabled?

Did you know that *more women die each year as a result of the problems associated with osteoporotic fractures than from breast and ovarian cancer combined?*

What exactly is Osteoporosis? It is a condition in which your bones progressively weaken (or lose their density) to the point that they can break (fracture) with very little impact or trauma. It is known as the "silent thief" because your bones can lose their density or strength without you feeling any symptoms at all, at least until a fracture occurs. The wrist, hip, and spine are the most commonly affected parts of the skeleton. Therefore, the best cure for osteoporosis is prevention.

Research has shown that certain types of exercise may not only increase or maintain the strength of your bones, but they may also help prevent the stumble or fall that causes the fracture in the first place.

While all physical activities are beneficial in one way or another, certain kinds are better for the bones than others. One of the most recommended forms of exercise for increasing bone mass and reducing the rate of age related bone loss is "weight-bearing exercise". This is exercise that requires you to support your entire body weight. Walking, running, and sports such as badminton, bowling, tennis, basketball, volleyball, etc. are all examples of weight bearing exercises. Although weight-bearing exercise is beneficial, there is one other form of exercise that is even more effective. It is called "resistance exercise". A common form of resistance exercise is weight training, done with barbells or dumbbells and/or various apparatuses available at gymnasiums and fitness centers.

In addition to the positive changes on bone mass, weight-bearing and resistance exercises have a second and just as important effect. The more you exercise and challenge your body, the stronger your muscles will become and the better your balance will be. This will make you less likely to fall and the better able to catch yourself, preventing you from falling in the first place.

To summarize, everyone should participate in regular activities that consist of “weight-bearing” or “resistance” forms of exercise. This is particularly true for women aged twenty and up. Whether it is Curves, Planet Fitness 3, or the Aquatic Center, go and go regularly. At the same time, you should take adequate levels of calcium and vitamin D. As well, don’t smoke or drink excessive amounts of coffee, as they both contain chemicals that will result in you losing more calcium from your body.