

# Keeping Your Bones Healthy



By  
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on

Whether you're young, old, or somewhere in between, bone health should be on your radar. Having weak bones is not just an issue for older women. In fact, osteopenia (low bone mineral density) is being diagnosed in both younger women AND men, most often in lower weight individuals. So if you're an athlete who is lower in weight OR if you're a person who hasn't exercised regularly for quite some time, read on to learn how to protect your bone health!

There are a number of foods and nutrients that can boost your bone health and are shown to have protective benefits!

**Lycopene** – This phytonutrient is found in tomatoes, ketchup, tomato sauce, watermelon, canned tomato products (I suggest buying low-sodium), pink grapefruit, red peppers, apricots, and guava.

**Flaxseed oil** – Contains ALA Omega-3 Fatty Acids, which may help to protect bone matrix formation and bone mineralization. Add to salad dressings, in your shakes, or into your oatmeal.

**Protein** – Choose at least 60 grams daily for women, and 80 grams for men. The amount varies based on your weight and how active you are. You will definitely need more if you strength train regularly. Choose lean protein sources such as: skinless chicken breast, skinless turkey breast, fresh fish,

tofu, beans or lentils, veggie burgers, lean turkey burger, unsalted nuts or seeds, low or non-fat Greek or plain yogurt, eggs or egg whites, and peanut, almond, or soy butter (be careful with portions).



**Calcium** – 1,000 mg per day for those under age 50; 1,200 to 1,500 mg after age 50. Supplementation can be extremely beneficial as getting this amount of calcium from our foods is challenging.

**Vitamin D** – This vitamin is essential for calcium absorption. You need 600 IU per day up to age 70, and 800 to 1,000 IU per day after age 70. These figures were updated just yesterday, however many health professional are of the opinion that the preventative dosage should be higher. I recommend supplementing with Vitamin D at least 2,000 IU per day up to age 70 (and up to 4,000 IU during the winter months) and 4,000 IU per day after age 70. This is especially important for those of us who live in the Northeast due to the fact that during the winter months, the sun is not strong enough for the skin to make vitamin D!

This may come as a surprise to you, but decreasing your grain intake can also be a beneficial step in protecting your bone mass! Researchers at Tufts recently found that breads, cereal, rice, pasta, tortillas, and pastries release sulfuric acid when metabolized, which can add to the acid load, and may result in the body's breaking down of bone and muscle in order to neutralize the excess acid.

You're probably wondering: What can I eat? Increase your consumption of fruits and vegetables! YUM!!! These foods are broken down to bicarbonate and add alkali to the body to help neutralize the acid. There are so many fruits and vegetables

to choose from and so much you can do with them. I encourage you to try some that are new to you!



Healthy bones are essential to a healthy body.

How can you transfer this information to your every-day life?

- Have a stir-fry with lots of vegetables; a small amount of chicken, tofu, or shrimp; add a half cup of brown rice, wheat pasta or quinoa.
- A small amount of whole-wheat pasta with tomato sauce, mixed vegetables and 4 ounces of ground turkey breast, lean meat such as sirloin, flank or 93% lean ground beef, veggie crumbles, or texturized vegetable protein.
- A 6" tortilla (use brands such as Joseph's, La Tortilla Factory, or Cedars Whole Wheat) filled with beans, sauteed peppers, onions and mushrooms, avocado and salsa.

These tips and your motivation to live a healthier lifestyle will help you to keep your bones strong for a lifetime!

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