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Bone density sharply enhanced by weight training, even in the elderly

As people reach old age, osteoporosis is a major determining factor in quality of life. In *Healing Moves*, Dr. Mitchell and Carol Krucoff write, "Age-related declines in muscle and bone mass ... can lead to frailty and fracture -- the primary reason older adults wind up in nursing homes." If you don't want to spend your later years resting in a nursing home, losing your independence and draining your or your family's financial resources, you need to do something to remain independent. According to numerous studies and aging manuals, that "something" is strength training, an activity known to increase bone mass and thus decrease the possibility of osteoporosis.

Postmenopausal women are especially prone to osteoporosis because they lack estrogen. Most women know this and begin to take calcium supplements to ward off the debilitating disease. Calcium supplements are important, but according to Kathy Keeton's book, *Longevity*, they are not enough. Not only does your body need magnesium and other nutrients to assimilate calcium into your bones, it also needs strength training to retain calcium. Keeton quotes nutritional biochemist Dr. Neil S. Orenstein: "Without consideration of these effects, no amount of calcium supplementation will prevent osteoporosis."

Strength training does not mean that you have to train for the Olympics or tediously do the same exercise over and over.

Physical impact and weight-bearing exercise stimulates bone formation. Just as a muscle gets stronger and bigger the more you use it, a bone becomes stronger and denser when you regularly place demands upon it.

For best results, women should start strength training long before menopause; however, women can experience the benefits at any age. "A 1994 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* revealed that women as old as 70 who lifted weights twice a week for a year avoided the expected loss of bone and even increased their bone density slightly," writes Robert Haas in *Permanent Remissions*. According to Dr. George Kessler's *Bone Density Program*, "One study of people in their 80s and 90s living in nursing homes who exercised with weight machines three times a week for just eight weeks showed improvements in strength, balance and walking speed." It's never too late to lift just a few light weights and increase your bone density.

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Dr Terry Notaras is a Doctor of Chiropractic and Doctor of Osteopathy. He is registered as a Chiropractor and Osteopath with the Chiropractic Board of Australia and is a member of the Chiropractors Association of Australia. Dr Notaras is also an Associate Member of the Australasian College of Chiropractors.

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Dr Notaras has looked after the health of some of the world's best professional Golf Tour. He has also looked after the Olympic Cycling Squad as well as many other elite athletes. This background allows the technique used at Southern Spinal Care to be the latest and the most effective in the world.

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