

YOUR CARE POLMED

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Taking care of your back and bone health



1 IN 3 PEOPLE

Low back pain at any given time.



Back pain is also responsible for more absenteeism from work than cancer.

POOR SPINAL HEALTH RISK FACTORS

- Age
- Genetics
- Jobs that involve repetitive bending and long hours of either standing or sitting in a chair
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Excess weight
- Smoking
- Poor posture



! Poor spinal care can cause back pain.

POOR BONE HEALTH

Poor bone health can also cause back pain. In fact, poor bone health increases the risk of bone health issues such as osteoporosis. Globally, osteoporosis is responsible for more than 8.9 million fractures annually.

Risk factors for poor bone health

- Age – bones become weaker with age
- Gender – women face a higher risk
- Family history
- Tobacco and alcohol use
- High hormone levels
- Ethnicity – Caucasian and people of Asian descent are at a higher risk
- Size – if you are underweight, you are at a higher risk



IMPROVING SPINAL CARE

Our core muscles are the central link in a chain connecting our upper and lower body. The core muscles have two main functions:

1. To spare the spine from excessive load
2. To transfer force from the lower body to the upper body and vice versa



STRONG CORE

Enhances balance and stability.
Helps to relieve tension in back muscles.

Note: Back injuries are not usually linked to one specific incident (lifting something heavy), but rather to a history of frequent heavy lifting with poor posture.

EXERCISE FOR SPINAL CARE AND BETTER CORE STRENGTH

Remember: If you have a medical condition, check with your healthcare provider before you start a new exercise routine.

Forearm plank on knees

This is one of the most effective core-building exercises. First placing your knees on the floor helps to teach you proper form without compromising your back.

Start by holding this position for 10 seconds and then releasing to the floor. Slowly work up to holding this position for 20, 30, 45, and eventually 60 seconds.

FEET AND KNEES:

Keep your feet and knees on the floor.

SPINE:

Keep your core tight and your back straight.

HEAD AND SHOULDERS:

Relax your head and shoulders, and look at the floor.

ABDOMINAL MUSCLES:

Engage your abdominal muscles, drawing your navel toward your spine.

ELBOWS:

Keep your elbows directly under your shoulders.

FOREARMS:

Keep your forearms flat on the floor and facing forward.

Once you've mastered the forearm plank on knees position, you can try a traditional plank.

IMPROVING BONE HEALTH



Exercise

Weight-bearing exercises help the body to build stronger bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis:

- **Jumping rope** and **dancing** are high-impact exercises* that you can do at home.
- **Walking** is a low-impact exercise that helps to improve bone health (increase speed to add intensity).

* You may need to avoid high-impact exercise if you're at risk of breaking a bone or have broken a bone due to osteoporosis.



Diet

- **Calcium** helps to keep your bones healthy. It can be found in dairy products, nuts, green leafy vegetables as well as sardines and pilchards.
- **Vitamin D** helps your body absorb calcium. It can be obtained through the sun's rays as well as oily fish like salmon and mackerel.
- **Vitamin K** works with calcium to help build stronger bones. It can be found in green leafy vegetables, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage.

SCREENING TO EVALUATE BONE HEALTH

A screening using bone mineral density (BMD) testing should be performed in women over 65 years and men over 70 years.

Talk to your doctor about this test if you fall in one of these age categories. **Remember to refer to your member guide or contact your scheme to check the option-specific benefits available to you based on the proposed screenings and treatment, as benefits may be subject to limits.**

References

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