

EXERCISES FOR OSTEOPOROSIS

Exercises for osteoporosis aim to (a) strengthen bones, (b) strengthen muscles and (c) maintain good balance and posture.

Exercises that are good for bones and muscles are those activities that are weight bearing. This is because these activities stress the bone and promote them to react by getting stronger. These weight bearing exercises can be graded into low, moderate and high impact.

You should aim to do a minimum of 30 minutes daily of low or moderate impact activity. You can split the time up into 10 minute portions if it helps.

Low Impact: Examples are brisk walking, low impact aerobics, stair climbing.

Moderate impact: Jogging, power walking (brisk walking with vigorous arm movements and/or use of hand weights).

High impact: High impact aerobics, skipping, jumping exercises. For example hopping up and down, about five inches off the floor, and landing flat footed, at least 15 times, daily.

If you have severe osteoporosis or have fractured a bone in the past, consult a doctor before embarking on these.

Other forms of exercise that are not weight bearing, such as cycling and swimming, do not directly strengthen bones, but can be useful in strengthening the muscles and helping with flexibility.

Weight training exercises, involving lifting light free weights help to strengthen bones and muscles and should be performed at least three times per week. You should get some instruction from a physiotherapist or personal trainer before embarking on these.

Some basic postural and stretching exercises are given below.

Postural exercises



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Standing posture

Stand with your head, shoulders and buttocks against a wall, with your heels 2 to 3 inches from the wall.

Relax your shoulders and pull in your chin. Tighten your abdomen and buttocks.

Press your back against the wall, leaving room for your hand to fit flat behind the curve of your lower back.

Hold 30 seconds.



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Walking posture

Hold your head high. Keep your back and neck as straight as possible.

Keep your chin parallel to the ground. Gently tighten your abdominal muscles.

Let your shoulders move freely and naturally.



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Wall arch

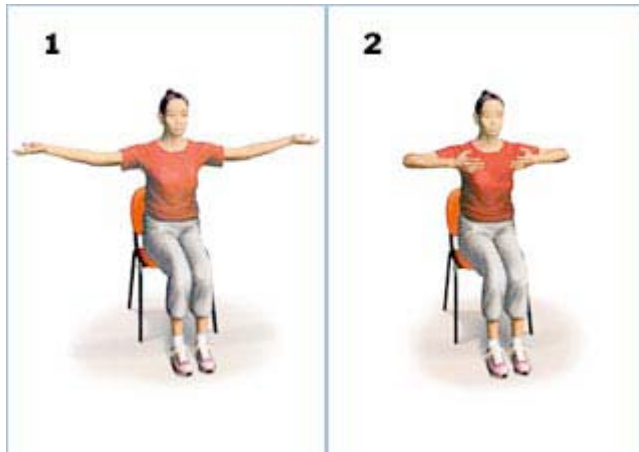
Stand facing the wall, arms at your sides, feet 6 inches apart and 6 inches from the wall.

While inhaling, flatten your stomach and stretch both arms up to touch the wall (1).

Exhale and lower both of your arms to the starting position.

While inhaling, reach up with your right arm and stretch down with your left arm (2).

Exhale and lower your right arm to the starting position.



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Chest stretch

Sit with your feet flat on the floor. Keep your back erect and look straight ahead.

Stretch your arms out to the side, keeping them level with your shoulders (1).

Bend your arms at the elbows and bring your hands toward your chest (2).

Repeat five to 10 times.



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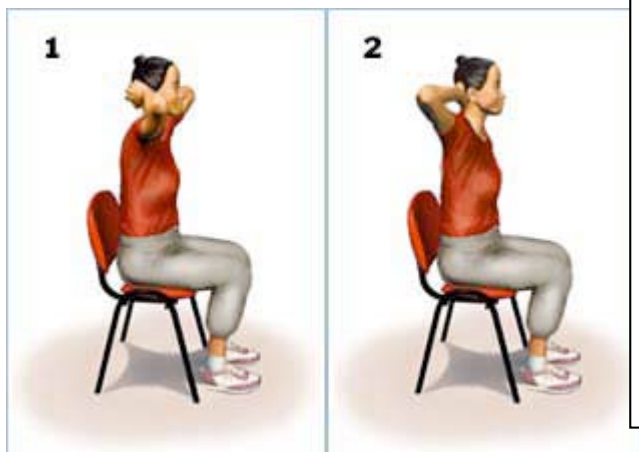
Chin tuck

To straighten your head and shoulders:

While seated, look straight ahead.

Pull your chin in toward your neck, but keep looking straight ahead; don't let your head bend forward. Push your hands down on your thighs to help straighten your back.

Hold for a few seconds. Repeat five times.



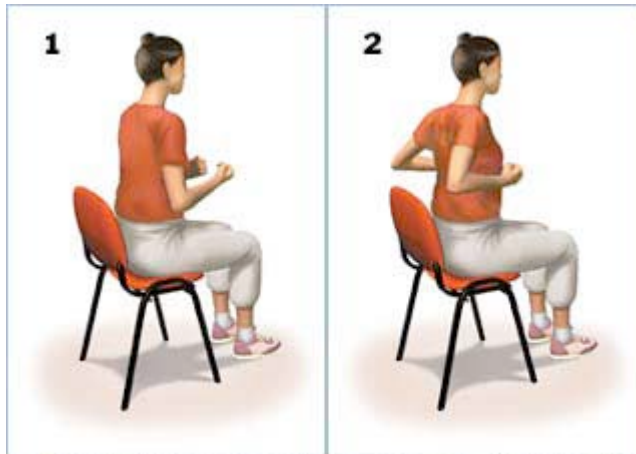
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Back posture exercise

Sit in a chair as shown, with your hand behind your neck (1).

Inhale while gently moving your elbows backward (2).

Hold the position for a few seconds, breathing normally, before returning to your starting position. Repeat five to 10 times..



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Shoulder blade squeeze

With your feet flat on the floor, sit slightly forward in a sturdy chair, keeping your back and neck straight.

Look straight ahead, bending your arms at the elbows (1).

Gently move your elbows and shoulder blades back as far as you can and still be comfortable (2).

Hold for five seconds while breathing normally. Return your arms to the starting position. Repeat five to 10 times.



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Upper back lift

Lie facedown on the floor with a pillow under your abdomen and hips (1). Use a rolled towel to cushion your forehead, if you wish.

Keep your arms at your sides as you tighten your abdominal muscles. Keep your head in line with your neck and torso. Focus on keeping your shoulders down — don't let them shrug up toward your ears.

Inhale and raise your head and chest a few inches from the floor (2).

Hold for five seconds, breathing normally, before returning to your starting position. Rest for a few seconds. Repeat five to 10 times.



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Back and shoulder stretch

Lie on the floor. Bend your knees, tighten your abdominal muscles and stretch your arms above your head (1).

Keeping your arms straight, spread them out and lower them until they're level with your shoulders (2 and 3).

Hold the position for a few seconds while breathing normally. Then return your arms to the starting position. Repeat this exercise five to 10 times.

1



2



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Pelvic tilt

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor (1). Maintain a normal curve in your back; don't arch your back. Tighten your abdominal muscles.

Roll your pelvis down to flatten your back against the floor (2). Avoid using your leg and buttock muscles.

Hold the position for five seconds while breathing normally, and then relax. Repeat this exercise 10 times



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Sitting knee extension

Sit with your back straight and your hands on your thighs. Tighten your abdominal muscles and look straight ahead.

Slowly straighten one knee while lifting your heel a few inches from the floor. Don't slouch or round your back.

Hold this position for a few seconds while breathing normally. Relax and return to the starting position. Repeat five to 10 times with each leg.