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Yoga moves that build bones

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Poses that focus on the spine can also help improve posture, preventing the hunched back that is typical in older osteoporosis sufferers. Women who have a small frame or a family history of osteoporosis are more prone to the disease—so if your mother or grandmother has been diagnosed, be doubly sure to add these poses from Rubenstein to your repertoire.

Chair Pose

This pose strengthens the muscles around the hip, one of the most common sites for osteoporosis. It also improves your balance, which will help decrease your chances of falling and fracturing a bone when you get older and your bones are weaker.

1. Begin standing up tall with your feet hip-width apart.
2. Exhale as you bend your knees and lower your hips back as if you were going to sit on a chair; sweep your arms overhead.
3. Keep your feet flat on the floor with your knees aligned over your ankles.
4. Turn your palms to face each other with your arms straight and shoulders dropping away from your ears.
5. As you hold this pose, reach your tailbone toward the floor and the crown of your head toward the ceiling. Hold for as many breaths as feels comfortable.
6. Inhale as you stand up straight again. Repeat six times.

Cobra Pose

Osteoporosis patients often suffer thoracic spine compression fractures, which happen when the front part of the vertebrae compresses down, causing a person's posture to look bent forward. This pose strengthens the upper back muscles and the spine, which help maintain proper posture and may help prevent a compression fracture from occurring. Cobra is also a perfect pose to combat computer hunch.

1. Begin lying facedown with your legs slightly wider apart than your hips.
2. Place your palms on the mat next to your shoulders, fingers pointing forward.
3. Hug your elbows in close to your rib cage as you draw your shoulder blades down your back, toward your waist. You should feel an opening in your chest.
4. Inhale and use your back muscles (not your arms) to lift your head and chest off the floor. Breathe smoothly and deeply.
5. For an additional challenge, lift your hands off the mat, holding yourself with your back strength alone.
6. Keep your neck long and in line with your spine, looking at the floor a few feet in front of you.
7. Exhale as you return to the starting position. Hold for one breath; repeat 10 times.

Side Plank Pose

By Pure Matters

Osteoporosis -- bone mass so low it puts you at high risk of breaks and fractures -- affects 8 million women in the United States. Although the disease is most often diagnosed after [menopause](#), women can start losing bone density as early as their 30s, says Lori Rubenstein, founder of Mosaic Physical Therapy in Los Angeles.

Fortunately, yoga poses that strengthen the areas most likely to suffer -- the hips, spine, and wrists - can help maintain bone density, she says.

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Some of the most common osteoporosis-related fractures are in the hip, ribs, spine and wrist. The weight-bearing Side Plank Pose strengthens the muscles of the outer hip, side of the trunk, and arm.

1. Lie face down on the floor with your upper body propped on your forearms with your elbows directly beneath your shoulders.
2. Roll your body over to the right side, supporting your torso on your right forearm and raising your hips and stacking your feet so your body forms a straight plank. (For more of a challenge, you can push up so that you're supported by your right palm instead of your forearm. Don't take it to this level if you have wrist trouble.)
3. Raise your left hand and extend it skyward so you have one long, straight line from middle finger to shoulders to right wrist. The only body parts touching the floor are your right forearm and the outside edge of the right foot.
4. Breathe and lengthen your torso as much as you can. Hold for three to five full breaths.
5. On your last exhale, return to the starting position and repeat on the other side. Repeat the sequence 10 times.

Tabletop Pose

This pose strengthens the muscles of the arms, back, hips, and legs. It also stretches the front of the body to counteract slumped posture. In addition, it helps improve bone strength of the wrists, spine, and hips. If you have neck problems, you may want to skip this move, though.

1. Sit with knees bent and feet flat on the floor, aligned with your hips.
2. Place your hands behind you with the fingers pointing toward your hips.
3. Squeeze your shoulder blades together on an inhale to open the chest and draw the shoulders backward toward each other.
4. Maintain this position as you contract your buttock muscles and lift your hips up.
5. If it's comfortable, tilt your head back slightly.
6. Maintain straight alignment of the body by contracting your buttock muscles and squeezing your shoulders to press the chest open. Hold for about 20 seconds.

Source: <http://resources.purematters.com/healthy-body/bone-health/yoga-moves-that-build-bones>

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