



Preventing bone loss is important for women during menopause and postmenopausal stages. Women are more at risk for osteoporosis and are more prone to fractures (bone breaks). During the postmenopausal stage bones tend to break down more quickly than they are formed, increasing the risk of fragility fractures in the hip, spine, and wrist.

### Why does this happen?

This is because oestrogen, the hormone that's important for keeping bone density stable and maintaining bone strength, decreases during menopause. As a result, bone density starts to go down too.

- With this loss of bone density comes reduced bone strength and a greater risk of breaking bones.
- Women can lose up to 20% of bone density during the five to seven years following menopause.

**Osteoporosis** is often called “a silent disease” usually determined with the first fracture (bone break) or by measuring the reduction of bone density. Common symptoms can include:

- Back pain, if there are small fractures or if vitamin D is extremely low
- Loss of up to two inches in height
- Kyphosis, or a hunchback appearance, affecting posture

The International Menopause society have produced a leaflet on bone health: [WMD-2021-English-leaflet.pdf \(imsociety.org\)](https://www.imsociety.org/WMD-2021-English-leaflet.pdf)

### How can you look after your bone health after the menopause?

There are a number of strategies to help your bones stay strong as you age. They include the following:



[HRT \(hormone replacement therapy\)](#). This can help to increase your levels of oestrogen which can reduce some of the key health risks for post-menopausal women, including osteoporosis.

## Exercise

There are also some key lifestyle changes which may help too. Starting a regular and consistent routine of **strength-based training** is very important at this stage of life. Strength-based training can help to counteract the loss of bone strength and density you experience after menopause.

Some exercises you could try include:

- [Yoga](#) or Pilates
- Bodyweight movements, such as squats and planks
- Resistance band exercises
- Water aerobics
- Walking
- Weightlifting
- Using weighted machines at the gym

Even things such as standing up from your chair without using your hands can benefit you in developing strength.

You don't need to go to the gym or spend lots of money - many exercises can be done at home and don't require lots of time. On the [Wellbeing HAPI page](#) we offer videos which cover core strength, yoga and weight training.

## Diet

Eating a [healthy diet](#) is important at any age. But as you finish the menopause it's very important to eat a diet which will help to keep your bones strong. This means getting **plenty of protein** because it contains the building blocks needed for strong muscles. And strong muscles can also help to support your bones too.

You also need to make sure that you're getting a good amount of **calcium** in your diet. Calcium helps you to maintain bone density, so it's a good idea to consume dairy products regularly. If you have a plant-based diet, then check your dairy-free milk to see if it is fortified with calcium too.

Another mineral which is essential for bone health is **Vitamin D**. You can find Vitamin D in oily fish and egg yolks, but the best source is sunlight. **The UK government recommends that everybody supplements with Vitamin D from October to March**. This is because there's not enough sunlight during these months for you to get your Vitamin D requirements.

## Living with osteoporosis

If you're diagnosed with osteoporosis, there are steps you can take to reduce your chances of a fall, such as removing hazards from your home and having regular [sight tests](#) and [hearing tests](#).

## Osteoporosis support

The [Royal Osteoporosis Society](#) is the UK's national charity for osteoporosis. They offer a 3min online [osteoporosis risk checker](#).