

Exercise in Post-Menopausal Women

Post-menopausal women can face a variety of health issues. Exercise is a key part of staying healthy.

Why Exercise is Important in Post-Menopausal Women

- Exercise helps prevent osteoporosis by keeping bone and cartilage tissue strong and healthy.
- Exercise reduces the risk of heart attack and other cardiovascular diseases by increasing heart and respiratory rates.
- Exercise keeps your joints moving and keeps the muscles around your joints strong. This helps in the prevention of arthritis.
- Exercise will help to maintain regular bowel function, a common problem as people become older.
- Exercise will improve a woman's overall health and fitness by controlling weight, making the heart stronger and retaining a sense of well-being and alertness.

Exercise Helps Prevent Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a decrease in bone mineral density. Weight-bearing exercises are essential in preventing osteoporosis. These exercises cause weight to be placed on the bones, especially the hips, legs and spine. The weight placed on the bone helps slow deterioration of the bone.

Good Exercises for Post-Menopausal Women

- Experts agree that walking is the best form of exercise for post-menopausal women. It can be done anywhere, at anytime and promotes social interaction. Donald E. Waite, D.O., MPH, professor emeritus, Department of Family Medicine, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich., suggests that people walk in shopping malls. Shopping malls are extremely safe, plus you don't need to worry about the weather, he says.
- Light weight training will help build muscle mass and keep muscles tone.
- Low-impact aerobics is great for increasing heart and respiratory rates, which helps keep vital organs healthy.
- General activity is also urged. Older women should go outside and wash the car or work in the garden.

Exercise should be done daily for at least 30 minutes. If not, then at least three times a week. "Any activity is better than no activity," says Waite.

Other Preventive Measures

Exercise does not work alone. Post-menopausal women need to do the following to insure proper health:

- Have a calcium intake of at least 1,500 milligrams a day to help build strong bones.
- Limit daily fat and cholesterol intake to help prevent cardiovascular disease.
- Maintain a normal body weight for their height.
- Do not smoke. Smoking increases the chance for cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

Suggestions for post-menopausal women and exercise

- Women should consult their doctor when starting a new exercise program. He or she can evaluate their medical history and help set up an exercise program.
- Women should pick an exact date of when they would like to start exercising and stick to it.
- Women should ask a friend or family member to join them in their exercise program.
- Women should drink six to eight glasses of water a day. If exercising in a hot environment, drink 10 to 12 glasses a day.
- Women should monitor their calorie intake.

- In the event of uncommon pain or discomfort in any joint, muscle or tendon, women should stop and consult their doctor.
- Women should not exercise right before bed - it may cause trouble with sleeping.

Source

American Osteopathic Association

