

[IMAGE]

Aerobics for Your Bones

Nearly one in three people currently residing in the United States was born between 1946 and 1964. Many of these "Baby Boomers" are women now nearing or well into their 50s - the postmenopausal stage of life. For many of these women, this is a crucial time in life, particularly with respect to declining hormone levels and bone density.

Evidence suggests that women lose approximately 2.5 percent of her bone mineral density (BMD) per year following menopause. Following a recent analysis of 13 studies, researchers came to the conclusion that exercise - in particular, aerobic exercise - can help maintain BMD as women age.

Previously, data were not available for BMD in postmenopausal women; only recently has dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) been utilized to gauge bone density before and after exercise. Of the exercises subjects performed within the studies examined, those yielding the most positive data with respect to bone density were jogging, walking (briskly) and stair climbing, in that order.

Results indicated that BMD was most improved in the lumbar vertebrae and femoral neck. For years, pharmacologic intervention - drugs - has been a first line of defense in preventing bone loss and resultant osteoporosis. This analysis, however, adds to increasing evidence suggesting the value of conservative tactics - in this case, exercise.

For more information on ways to maintain bone density and ward off osteoporosis, talk to your doctor of chiropractic.

Reference:

Miller LE, Nickols-Richardson SM, Ramp WK, et al. Bone density in postmenopausal women. Does exercise training make a difference? *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* February 2004;32(2).

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