

[IMAGE]

Intense Exercise Best for Bones

Low bone mineral density increases fracture risk, especially in the larger bones of the hip and upper leg. Older individuals who suffer a hip fracture often lose their independence and face an increased risk of death in the year following their injury. Seniors can strengthen their bones, however, by stimulating bone growth through weight training.

To compare the effectiveness of two exercise regimens focused on increasing bone density, the authors of a study in a recent edition of *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* examined over 60 seniors (average age: 68 years) for bone mineral density. The individuals were then divided into three groups: no exercise, low-intensity exercise (sets of 13 repetitions using moderate weight), or high-intensity exercise (sets of eight repetitions using heavier weight). Exercise groups performed 12 resistance exercises three times per week for six months. Bone density was re-evaluated at the end of the study using scans of the hip, femur, and spine.

Muscular strength increased significantly in both groups (approximately 17% average for each group) and remained unchanged in the no-exercise group. Yet only the high-intensity exercise group showed significant bone density increases in their upper legs.

One of the best ways elderly individuals can increase their bone strength is by performing high-intensity resistance exercises of eight repetitions, using 80% of their maximum weight potential. Those who are unable to lift a high percentage of their body weight should use lighter weights and add more repetitions. To learn more about senior health, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/senior.html>.

Reference:

Vincent KR, Braith RW. Resistance exercise and bone turnover in elderly men and women. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* 2002;34(1), pp. 17-23.

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http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=615&no_paginate=true&no_b=true