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# Strengthen your aging bones!

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**As men enter late 40s-mid 50s, their bone density and strength reduces.**



According to a new study by researchers in the University of Missouri-Columbia, certain types of exercises significantly contributed to improve bone-density in middle-aged men with a low bone mass. As men enter late 40s-mid 50s, their bone density and strength reduces. This results in weak joints, pain while walking and also puts them at risk for developing osteoporosis. Exercises such as weight-lifting and jumping, while known to enhance muscle strength, also have a positive impact on bone growth and strengthening, a feature which is little talked about. Mentioned below are a few exercises that can help middle-aged men battle weak bones and remain strong during a period otherwise associated with debilitating ailments-

**Weightlifting-**Weightlifting exercises continued over a span of 6 months have been observed to significantly enhance bone mass. However, not all kinds of weight lifting will serve the purpose. As only the bone experiencing the mechanical load gets stronger, middle-aged men should focus on doing squats, deadlifts, lunges and the overhead press to load the lumbar spine and the hip region. Increasing the intensity and the weight is also important to build bone strength over time.

**Walking or jogging**-Cardiovascular workouts bearing weight are better for bone strengthening compared to exercises such as swimming or cycling. Increasing the intensity of your walks and going up and down inclined terrains helps to put more force on the bones, thereby strengthening them. In fact, middle-aged men should practice stomping their feet to increase bone density in the hips. At least four stomps on each foot twice a day using enough pressure to crush a can will strengthen bone mass in the pelvic region.

**Resistance training**-It is important to incorporate some sort of resistance training in your exercise schedule every week. As you put more tension on your muscles, it puts higher pressure on your bones, which then respond simultaneously by creating fresh, new bone. While it is not a very popular exercise with middle-aged men, resistance training offers significant bone health benefits.

**'Daily living' exercises**-A quick plank while waiting for the microwave's timer to reach zero or some curls with the bucket while watering the plants, exercise should be an integral part of daily lives of individuals. Such practices help to keep fit while not devoting extra time specifically for exercises. While it is recommended to devote 30-45 mins every day to exercise, making daily chores into smart exercise options also help middle-aged men to keep fit.

**Ample rest**-It is necessary to rest well and space out exercises with recuperation time. Over-stressing muscles or carrying out high-intensity exercises without proper rest leads to burnout and eventual weakening. Regular exercise helps individuals to sleep well and have healthy cardiovascular rhythms, which is very important to stay fit and active, especially during middle-age.

**Other important tips:**

- Having a diet rich in calcium and other essential nutrients will go a long way in strengthening bone mass and density.
- It is important to get adequate sunlight as a source of Vitamin D3 which helps in strengthening bones.
- Lifestyle changes like giving up smoking is essential for healthy bones.
- It is recommended that men over the age of 40 undergo an annual check up as it will help detect chronic diseases like diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, coeliac disease, etc that are linked to bone health.

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