



# Exercise for Healthy Bones

COURTESY OF THE SPOKANE OSTEOPOROSIS CENTERS

**EXERCISE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR BONES**, especially when you make your peak bone mass before you are 20 years old. At all ages, exercise is beneficial; back extension strengthening and walking or jumping have been shown to improve bone mass. Gymnasts with all their running and jumping have higher bone density, than swimmers and cyclists. The more weight that is put on the bone during the sports activities, the higher the bone density.

Surprising changes or forces on the bones, instead of a gradual increase in weight, results in more bone development. For example, when a gymnast dismounts, the bones get a real jolt, about 5 times the gymnast's weight. All the athletes with high bone density do lots of jumping. Swimmers, on the other hand, are floating in the water and their bones don't have to carry much weight. Cyclists and kayakers are sitting, so less weight is on the skeleton.

Just because most athletes have higher bone density, it does not necessarily mean that it was due to the sports. The athletes had higher bone density to start with. How could you prove whether the exercise itself was improving the bone density and bone strength?

Weight is closely related to bone strength. In adults who are too fat, the bone density is high. If they are thin, the bone density is low. In fact, if we did not care about anything, but the skeleton, we would want everybody to look like a Sumo wrestler. But that's not healthy for the heart and the joints, so we don't advise anyone to become overweight. But it is important to avoid becoming too thin. Adults who lose weight lose bone density. Thin men and women are more likely to break bones when they are older.

If kids are overweight because they don't get any exercise, the bone density might be low and they might break their wrist easily. Anorexic teenagers have bones that can become very fragile and may never recover to normal strength.

---

For more information on osteoporosis diagnosis, prevention and treatment please log on to [www.spokaneosteoporosis.com](http://www.spokaneosteoporosis.com)