

SPECIAL BONE HEALTH ISSUE

Put muscle into your bone

Weight-bearing and resistance exercise are vital

By DARLA ATLAS
Special Contributor

You may not feel the need to exercise in your bones, but your bones will definitely feel better for it.

Contrary to the assumption that our bones are just chalky sticks, they're alive and benefit from a good workout. Still, most of us don't think about keeping bones strong until it's almost too late, says Colette Cole, a personal trainer at the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas.

"A lot of women don't take it to heart until they've gone to the doctor and gotten the diagnosis" of osteoporosis, says Ms. Cole, who is leading a four-week pro-

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BRAD LOPER/Staff Photographer

Jeannie Nethery (right) and Barb Farmer work with Cooper Aerobics Center trainer Colette Cole (left) in a class designed to build stronger bones.

BONE WORKSHOP

The Cooper Aerobics Center's Female Focus program features two four-week sessions on bone health. The series features a personalized fitness assessment, two educational presentations and eight strength sessions. The cost is \$500 for Cooper Fitness Center members, \$676 for nonmembers. One starts today and another on Aug. 22. For more information, visit www.cooperaerobics.com or call 972-233-4832.

Digital EXTRA

■ **Video:** Log on for videos of celebrity trainer Kathy Kaehler's five favorite weight-bearing exercises. Plus, more resources on the impact of fitness on bone health.

DallasNews.com/extra

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gram on bone health at the Cooper center this summer.

Here are tips to start toning those bones.

HOW IT WORKS: Dr. David Di Paolo, radiologist at the University of Texas Health Center at Tyler and a certified fitness trainer, says bones are "dynamic structures, constantly remodeling and adapting based on stresses they experience." Another way to put it, from the National Osteoporosis Foundation: When you strike a tennis ball or land after jumping, "chemical messengers tell your arm and leg bones to be ready to handle that weight and impact again."

SAVING UP FOR AN OLDER DAY:

"When you're younger, you're building up your maximum amount of bone," says Ms. Cole. "We build them up until we're about 30 years old, so what we do in our teens and 20s — like getting enough calcium and vitamin D and the activities we do — has a huge impact on the amount of bone we're going to lose later on."

EXERCISES THAT WORK:

Weight-bearing exercises are best for bones, experts agree. These are exercises in which bones and muscles work against gravity. Most cardio activities such as jogging, hiking and aerobics are included, but swimming and biking are not.

Resistance exercises — activities that use muscular strength to improve muscle mass and strengthen bone — are also helpful. They include weightlifting or using resistance bands.

A good rule of thumb: four or five days of weight-bearing work per week, plus two or three days of resistance (doing eight to 12 repetitions per body part). Still, Ms.

Cole hesitates to recommend such numbers "because sometimes it's not really realistic."

WORKOUT SITES: Propel Fitness Water has teamed up with trainer Kathy Kaehler on a Web site that offers exercise video clips specifically designed for bone health (www.workoutwithkathy.com). Citracal provides videos and pictures of all exercises recommended from the Bone Estrogen Strength Training Study (www.citracal.com/best/exercises.aspx), which was funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Mission Pharmaceutical Co.

JUST OVERDOING IT? Those who have been diagnosed with osteoporosis should avoid twisting the spine, high-impact aerobics and exercises that call for a lot of bending from the waist, such as windmill toe touches. And overexercise is never a good idea — although Ms. Cole says that unless you're anorexic or bulimic, overexercise damages ligaments and joints more than bones. "It's more of a tissue issue," she says.

TENNIS BONES, ANYONE?

Certain exercises build up certain muscles. A study by the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research measured the bone density of athletes and revealed that bone mass density is higher across all sports, especially weight lifting, gymnastics and soccer. The athletes' legs, hips, spines and arms were on average 13 percent denser. (For a demonstration of athletes and their bone densities, visit depts.washington.edu/bonebio/ASBMRed/exercise.html.)

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