

Guidelines for Strength Training

- Prior to using exercise equipment, consult with a health care professional knowledgeable about osteoporosis and the use of the equipment. You will need to be instructed how to use the machines properly. It is recommended to have a qualified professional supervise your use of the machines for the first two weeks, for proper posture and maintaining neutral spine. If several weeks pass between your instruction session and the use of the equipment, it is recommended you have someone give you another “refresher course.”
- Note: With the use of any exercise equipment, it is important to maintain proper spinal alignment at all times. Whether you are standing, sitting or lying down, your ears should be aligned over the shoulders and the shoulders aligned over the hips. When you are upright, the breastbone should be lifted and a small inward curve maintained in the low back. When using equipment with a backrest, use the backrest to support your entire trunk and your head if possible.
- When performing resistive exercise, be sure to keep a regular breathing pattern during the workout. While moving the resistance, the movement should be slow, smooth and controlled. Never jerk or try to use momentum to lift a greater amount than you can in a controlled fashion.
- Start with lower resistance and progress slowly over time to a moderate level of resistance. Expect to be able to use more resistance with leg activity than arm activity.
- Do not let feelings of “competition” or your eagerness to “improve” tempt you to over exert. “Overdoing it” could lead to fatigue, damage and micro-fracture of the bone even if you do not specifically feel pain.
- When using a stationary bicycle, be aware of maintaining an erect posture. If the handlebars are adjustable, keep them at a comfortably high level to encourage you to “sit tall.” Bend or hinge forward from the hips to reach the handlebars if necessary. Use a resistance that allows you to maintain even pedaling throughout your riding time.
- When starting an exercise program, begin with one set of 10 repetitions. For progression of repetitions and weights, when 10 repetitions become too easy, progress to 15 repetitions; when 15 repetitions become too easy, progress to a heavier weight. You may progress to 2-3 sets of 15 repetitions.
- Perform a strength training program 3-4 days a week. Allow one day of rest after working a specific muscle group or body area.
- If pain occurs with exercise, stop the exercise and consult a medical professional.

If you have osteoporosis

When using exercise equipment, avoid machines involving excessive trunk rotation or forward bending, such as the following machines: abdominal exerciser and biceps machine. Use caution with the following machines: seated rowing machine, cross-country ski machine, stationary bicycles with moving handlebars, or elliptical trainers with moving handlebars. The movements involved in these machines could cause a spinal compression fracture in a person with low bone density. These machines may be appropriate to use if neutral spinal alignment is able to be maintained. If you have questions or concerns about the appropriateness or safety of using pieces of exercise equipment, consult a physical therapist or other trained professional.