

The Women's Health Research Program

Health Bulletin
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Will all that walking increase my bone density?

In short, probably not. Although physical activity is important for your muscle strength and heart fitness, activities like walking and gardening have little effect on your bone strength.

And swimming? Well no, swimming does not build bone.

What about cycling? Road cycling does not appear to build bone either, even though one would expect it might with the resistance work involved. It is suspected that this is because all the exercise is done seated and therefore weight-supported, so there is no impact force on bones.

To improve your bone density you need to "load" your bones by activities like hopping and jumping. Studies have shown that simply repetitive hopping every day can make a difference to hip bone density. Resistance training, for example squats against a wall, can also be effective.

Although a specific exercise program might improve bone density and



muscle strength, it is not the answer to fall prevention, and falling is the main reason people fracture. Good balance and muscle 'power' are essential components to fall prevention. Researchers have shown that balance is improved by having greater central trunk stability, what people often refer to as "core strength". Greater muscle trunk strength has been associated with better lower limb balance and fewer falls in older people.

Power training involves developing both

muscle strength and speed. For example a person crossing at the traffic lights might have enough strength to cross the road, but to get across the road before the lights change the person needs muscle speed as well as strength (and of course balance). As we age we lose power as well as strength so exercises to maintain power are important.

An example of a strength exercise would be sitting upright and well supported in a chair against a wall

and then with your hands across your chest rising slowly out of the chair to standing, and then sitting down again. This engages your buttock muscles, quads and lower abdominal muscles. If you do the same exercise but stand up from the chair quickly, and then sit back down at a gentle pace this is adding in a power component to the exercise.

For those interested in reading more see Sherrington and others, NSW Public Health Bulletin http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=NB10056.pdf

Capoeira for kids

Rossana Candiota Nogueira of Griffith University presented the findings of her research study of kids doing Capoeira classes at the ANZ Bone and Mineral Society 23rd Annual Conference in Melbourne this year. Rossana and her colleagues did a study of the effectiveness

of Capoeira classes for primary school children on their bone health and general fitness. Capoeira is described as an Afro-Brazilian practice that combines martial art, dance and gymnastics. For kids it is a fun activity that involves co-ordination, flexibility and impact. The only equipment required

is space and an instructor. Rossana's research, yet to be published showed benefits for the children involved in terms of bone health, body fat and fitness.

Capo kids is catching on internationally as an activity for kids to be active and have fun.



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A New Approach to Treating Women Who Do Not Experience Orgasm

Most recently a novel approach has been developed to potentially treat women who fail to reach orgasm (anorgasmia). Researchers recognised that testosterone therapy not only improved sexual desire, but also resulted in increased vaginal blood flow and increased orgasm frequency. As a result the approach of using testosterone on an “as needs” basis is being studied in centres across Australia and North America, including the Women’s Health Research Program.

Our new study will assess whether the self-administration of a single dose of testosterone as an intra-nasal gel will result in

ability to reach orgasm for women who have previously experienced orgasm but no longer do so.

To participate in this study women need to be aged between 18 and 65, be experiencing inability to reach orgasm, but have experienced orgasm in the past and be in a stable sexual relationship of at least 6 months duration.

The study is being conducted at our centre at the Alfred Centre in Melbourne as well as in Sydney, Perth and Adelaide. Women interested in participating in the trial should call 1800 998 055.

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