



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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YOGA THERAPY YOGA FOR OSTEOPOROSIS (part 6)

So far in this series we have learnt why yoga is an excellent solution for both osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, how a rounded spine can cause a wedge fracture leading to kyphosis, and how to prevent fractures in your bones. In the previous five newsletters I included yoga postures that focused on bone strength and muscle strength. This month we will do many postures that focus on balance.

Balance is crucial in preventing falls and fractures. In the balancing postures, you work on one leg at a time so that you are targeting your core and thigh muscles. These connect to your hips and stronger hips are crucial for balance and increases bone density in this vital area.

THE FOOD CONNECTION

Certain foods that damage your bones can also make you look older and tired. Cutting down on these five bone-damaging foods, you'll notice that the dark circles or bags under your eyes, dull-looking skin, and wrinkles become less prominent.

1. Sugar and simple carbohydrates (white pasta, white rice etc.) are foods that can make you look exhausted. Sugar harms collagen, which is an important component in youthful, healthy skin. Collagen also makes up part of the bone matrix that gives your skeleton a strong, flexible framework. Sugar weakens collagen, leading to sagging skin and fragile bones.

2. Drinking too much alcohol can also age your skin, and is also detrimental to your bones. First, alcohol dries out your skin because of its diuretic effect. Dry, dehydrated skin is more prone to wrinkles and dullness.

As I wrote last month - dehydration negatively affects your bones.

3. Trans fats are formed when liquid fats go through a process known as hydrogenation. You'll see them listed as "hydrogenated" oils in ingredient lists. Unhealthy fats harm your skin and speed up the aging process. They also cause inflammation which harms bones by reducing bone density to the point that osteoporosis can result. So avoid margarines and don't cook with sunflower oil or vegetable oils. Instead, use bone-healthy, inflammation-reducing oils such as **olive oil or coconut oil**.

4. Processed meats like sausage, hot dogs, bacon and salami contain toxic preservatives (sodium nitrite and sodium nitrate) and loads of sodium. These harmful preservatives obviously increase the toxic load and create a highly acidic environment in the body.

5. Salt has been misunderstood in recent years. Too much **table salt** is highly **acidifying** as it's composed of calcium chloride which is bleached and processed with man-made, chemical anti-caking agents. In contrast, **sun-dried sea salt** is naturally rich in potassium and other alkalising minerals like calcium, potassium, sulfur, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, manganese, copper, iodine and zinc. Still, use it in moderation.

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POSTURES THAT FOCUS ON BALANCE

If you want strong bones, it's vital that you incorporate exercise into your life. The action of muscle on bone stimulates your skeleton to build stronger, denser bones at the area of impact. Strong, flexible legs help you catch your balance and avoid a fall.

PARSVAKONASANA (extended side stretch)

This posture stimulates your centre and the outer skeleton. It helps to improve your balance as you strengthen your legs and your hips.

If you have **osteoporosis**, place your front leg sideways across a chair with your knee bent and rest your front arm on your bent leg. Keep your back hand on your hip.

If you have **osteopenia**, you can practise this posture using a wall. Rest your front arm on your bent leg and roll your back thigh towards the wall. Stretch your back arm straight out from your shoulder.



RORY EARNSHAW

ARDHA CHANDRASANA (half-moon)

This posture helps to refine your balance as it strengthens the lumbar, thoracic and cervical vertebrae, the femur bones in your legs and the bones in your wrists, arms and shoulders.

If you have **osteoporosis**, practise this posture with your back against a wall and a chair to the side to use as a rest for your hand. Raise your back leg and keep the other hand on your hip.

If you have **osteopenia**, practise against a wall but use a lower support for your hand such as blocks. Keep your back shoulder against the wall as you raise your arm.



MARTIN SCONDUOTO

VIRABHADRASANA I (warrior I)

This posture strengthens the thigh and pelvic bones with hip extension to stimulate the lumbar and thoracic areas of the body and so helping with balance.

If you have **osteoporosis**, place your front leg sideways across a chair with your foot directly under your knee. Use the chair for support as you stretch your back leg keeping your toes curled under. Stretch your arms up.

If you have **osteopenia**, place your hands on the back of a chair for support. Bend your front knee and slowly stretch your back leg keeping your toes curled under.



RORY EARNSHAW

PARIVRTTA PARSVAKONASANA (revolved side posture)

This posture strengthens the lumbar, thoracic and cervical vertebrae as the spine revolves. It also strengthens the shoulders and pelvic bones.

If you have **osteoporosis**, sit with your inner leg bent across the chair and your back leg stretching back. Turn to face the back of the chair and bend forward over the front leg placing your front forearm on the bent leg and twist.

If you have **osteopenia**, kneel alongside the wall with your left side to the wall. Bend your left knee keeping your right knee bent on a blanket. As you twist to the left, place both hands on the wall and bend sideways until your right elbow is on the outside of your left knee. Keep your hands on the wall.



DEBRA MCCLINTON