



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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YOGA THERAPY PREVENTING FALLS

STRENGTHEN THE FEMUR BONE

To prevent having a fall as we age it's important to increase the density in the femur bones (thigh bones). This is especially important if you've been diagnosed with osteopenia or osteoporosis. Fractures of the femur can be very painful and take a long time to heal so regular exercise is essential for increasing the strength and resilience of your femurs. As you work the upper leg muscles, you're stimulating bone-building cells along the thigh bone where the muscles attach, resulting in increased density. Strong upper leg muscles are also important in maintaining balance. If muscles in the legs are tight or weak then you're much less likely to stop yourself from falling.

ARM ABDUCTION

When you raise your arm out to the side and up over your head, it's called abduction. This is important for building bone and improving balance. Raising your arm over your head involves the rotator cuff, deltoid and serratus anterior muscles all engaging to lift your upper arm, which then connects to the collarbone and shoulder blade. All of these bones in the arms and shoulders are important to strengthen in the fight against osteoporosis. As with the leg muscles, the action of muscle on the arm and shoulder bones boosts bone strength and fracture resistance. Strong muscles in this area are more likely to respond quickly to maintain balance and prevent a fall.

AN EXPANDED RIBCAGE

Arm abduction also lifts and expands the ribcage, another area of importance. An open ribcage leaves room for complete lung expansion. This allows you to take deep alkalising breaths which prevent the build-up of carbon dioxide and lactic acid, which are both very acidifying substances. This gives your kidneys a break from filtering out the carbon dioxide and lactic acid, freeing the water in your system to transport essential minerals to your bones. Highly oxygenated blood helps remove toxins and gets oxygen to every tissue where it's needed.








Also an uplifted ribcage gives you correct posture and prevents kyphosis, the rounding of the spine. When your ribcage is in the proper position and you're doing yoga postures to lift it, it helps build bone density in your ribs and so preventing a fracture. A recent study has shown that 50% of falls end up with broken ribs. When your rib muscles are strong, they help you take deep breaths to alkalise your pH, which is crucial for strong and youthful bones.

DEPRESSION

It's well known that exercise lifts your mood and helps alleviate depression. Less well known is that depression causes your body to produce a bone-damaging substance called noradrenaline. Exercise can counteract this as it can actually boost brain cell production. If you stop exercising as you get older, you start to feel tired and become less physically active. This causes your muscles to atrophy and fat to accumulate. So exercise not only helps to maintain strong bones but also keeps you feeling young and less likely to experience depression.

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STRENGTHEN YOUR LEGS AND ARMS TO PREVENT FALLS

<p>ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA (downward dog)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression • Strengthens the arms and legs • Helps prevent osteoporosis • Energises the body and relieves fatigue 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTY SCONDUTO</p>
<p>BHUJANGASANA (cobra)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the spine • Lifts the ribcage and stretches the chest and lungs • Strengthens the arms and shoulders • Helps relieve stress and fatigue • Opens the heart and lungs 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTIN SCONDUTO</p>
<p>ANJANEYASANA (low lunge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the femur bones in the thighs • Strengthens the bones in the arms and shoulders • Lifts and expands the ribcage and opens the lungs • Helps prevent kyphosis, the rounding of the spine • Strengthens the rib muscles 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTY SCONDUTO</p>
<p>PURVOTTANASANA (upward plank)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the arms and wrists • Strengthens the femur bones • Lifts the ribcage and opens the lungs • Stretches the shoulders and chest 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTIN SCONDUTO</p>
<p>ARDHA CHANDRASANA (half-moon)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the ankles, thighs and spine • Strengthens the arms and shoulders • Improves co-ordination and sense of balance • Helps relieve stress 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTIN SCONDUTO</p>
<p>NATARAJASANA (lord of the dance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the femurs (thigh bones) • Strengthens the legs and ankles • Lifts the ribcage and stretches the shoulders and chest • Improves balance 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">CHRIS ANDRE</p>
<p>UTKATASANA (chair)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the ankles, thighs, calves and spine • Strengthens the arms and shoulders • Stretches the shoulders and chest • Lifts the ribcage and helps prevent kyphosis • Helps to build bone density in the ribs 	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">CHRIS ANDRE</p>