

PhysioBiz

Health newflashes

for bodies busy moving, working, playing, being.



Jolly joints and blissful bones

Welcome to PhysioBiz, with healthcare advice and information you can trust and rely on, brought to you by the South African Society of Physiotherapy!

Where would you be without your bones and your joints? Lying in a messy jelly in the corner! **12-20 October is World Bone and Joint Day.** The South African Society of Physiotherapy celebrates with a few tips to make your skeleton happy and healthy.

- All kinds of exercise are good for your bones and joints and the muscles that rely on them.
- Weight-bearing exercise is a great bone strengthener. 'Weight-bearing' means any exercise in which you support your own body weight on your legs and feet, or hands and arms. Aim to do some several times a week for around 30 minutes a time. (Brisk walking is a great way to get going, if you haven't been active for a while.)
- Resistance exercises are also important to your musculoskeletal health. 'Resistance' means simply working against something that has a load, a weight (and that can even be your own body, as in planking, or using equipment like dumbbells) or resists you, like a resistance band.
- Seek types of exercise which will keep your interest. "If you love gardening or dancing or canoeing, go for it," says Rogier van Bever Donker, deputy president of the SASP. "You're more likely to keep at it if you enjoy it."
- "You'll often see people with osteoarthritis being advised to lose weight to reduce strain on joints, and therefore pain," says van Bever Donker. "In fact, recent research seems to indicate that it's actually the inflammation associated with poor gut bacteria due to overweight that causes the pain. This is rather hopeful, as it means that you might be able to eat and take supplements that can help your bacteria recover." Reduced pain as a result would make it easier for sufferers to exercise and stave off future pain!
- Good foods for gut bacteria? Look for foods that are fermented naturally (like *umqombothi*, kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha and natural yoghurt – you can even make your own pickles at home). Avoid sugar and simple carbohydrates, and eat lots of plants.
- What about supplements? People are often told to supplement with vitamin D and calcium for strong bones, but recently published research suggests that you might want to save your money. "A meta-analysis of fractures in hundreds of thousands of people, published in the BMJ in August this year, casts some doubt on this long-accepted belief," says van Bever Donker. "For now, just make sure you get a bit of sunshine, ten or twenty minutes or so, most days – obviously at times when your skin won't burn. And ensure you eat a varied diet that contains sources of vitamin D and calcium, like eggs, spinach, fatty fish and dairy."

Your physiotherapist can advise you if you have any concerns about bone and joint health. Find one via www.saphysio.co.za.

References

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