



## Healthy Ageing and Lifestyle

A healthy diet and lifestyle, incorporating exercise, lowers risk for many health problems associated with ageing, gives you more energy, and improves quality of life. A healthy lifestyle may reduce menopausal symptoms including hot flushes and sleep disturbance.

### Exercise for well-being

Physical activity and exercise may improve many of the common physical and emotional symptoms around menopause. Studies show that 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times per week improves the quality and quantity of life. Moderate exercise incorporates activities such as: brisk walking, cycling, tennis and golf. See section below on aerobic activity. Women should incorporate three types of activities into a weekly fitness plan: Aerobic exercise, flexibility training, and strength training. Some women may need to consult a doctor or physiotherapist about the type of exercise best suited for them. A personal trainer can help you get started and maintain motivation.

### Aerobic activity:

1. Best form of exercise for the cardiovascular system
2. Helps endurance but also helps burn fat e.g. walking for 30 minutes or jogging for 18 minutes burns 840 kJ
3. Vigorous aerobic exercise includes jogging, brisk walking, cycling, tennis, aerobic class, dancing, martial arts, skipping rope
4. Even activities such as climbing stairs, walking your dog, golf, gardening and playing with the kids can give you a light aerobic workout.

### Flexibility training:

1. This form of exercise protects you from injury, improves balance and provides muscle flexibility
2. Stretching is the simplest and easiest way to improve flexibility and agility
3. Yoga is probably the oldest form of stretching
4. Pilates is another form of flexibility training

### Strength training/weight bearing:

1. This form of exercise builds muscle tone, endurance and bone density.
2. Physical activity can prevent cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and osteoporosis.

### Exercise benefits your body in many other ways:

1. Improves circulation
2. Increases good (HDL) cholesterol levels
3. Reduces total cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure
4. Burns up kilojoules, so you can lose or maintain weight more easily
5. Increases endurance
6. Improves muscle tone and coordination
7. Reduces anxiety, depression and emotional stress
8. Builds another support group when you do it with friends
9. Can improve your balance and coordination, reducing the risk of falling and fracturing your bones
10. Increases self-esteem and well-being



**Exercise for women with osteoporosis:**

The best exercises to prevent or slow down osteoporosis are weight-bearing exercises such as power walking and strength training that include gravity and tension on your muscles.

- Stress builds bone, and putting weight on your bones provides the stress the bones need to improve and maintain in strength
- Weight-bearing exercise prevents bone loss and maintains bone tissue, which is critical for women of any age

**Eating to promote good health**

Healthy eating habits mean having a balanced diet of foods that keep your body well-nourished and able to fend off disease. Eating the right proportion of carbohydrates, protein and fats and consuming no more than 6300 to 7300 kilojoules (kJ) a day (1500 to 1800 calories) per day is easier than you think!

1. To maintain weight: consume 6300 to 6700 kJ (1500 to 1600 calories) a day.
2. To lose weight: consume 5450 to 5900 kJ (1300 to 1400 calories) a day.

The table below lists all the major food groups, their function and source.

Food group	Daily requirements	Why needed	Food sources
Carbohydrates	50-65% of daily kJ	Provide energy	Bread, cereals, and satiety pulses, fruit, sugar
Proteins	10-20% of daily kJ	Build tissue and muscles	Meat, fish, chicken and dairy products
Fats	20-30% of daily kJ	Supply fatty acids, help fat-soluble vitamin absorption, provide energy	Meats, dairy and plant foods
Fibre	Up to 40 g per day	Improves digestion, prevents constipation	Cereals, wholegrain products, fruits and vegetables

**Alcohol consumption:**

Experts recommend no more than two standard drinks of alcohol per day for women, with at least two alcohol-free days per week. The best approach when planning meals is to:

1. Think moderation and balance
2. Have three main meals and two snacks per day
3. Have smaller portions
4. Eat more oily fish
5. Restrict your meat intake
6. Use less fat and sugar



### Strengthening your bones

Osteoporosis (brittle bones) is particularly common in women after menopause because long periods of lower oestrogen levels promote bone loss. Diet and exercise are two of the best and easiest ways to maintain the health of your bones.

Post-menopausal women should consume 1200 to 1500 milligrams (mg) of calcium each day, with the intake spread throughout the day. To improve absorption of calcium, 400 International Units (IU) of vitamin D a day is needed. 10 to 15 minutes of sunshine daily provides all you need because sunshine stimulates the skin to produce vitamin D.

The table below lists major sources of calcium.

Type of food	Calcium content
Milk, 250 mls (Lower fat milks may contain more calcium)	285 mg
Yoghurt, 200g tub	340 mg
Cheddar cheese, 35 g (Harder cheeses may contain more calcium)	275 mg
Almonds, 100 g	220 mg
Brazil nuts, 100 g	150 mg
Peanuts, roasted and salted, 100 g	40 mg
Salmon, pink with bones, canned 100g	310 mg
Spinach, 100 g	50 mg
Silverbeet, 100 g	70 mg
Apricots, dried 50g	35 mg
Orange, medium	50 mg

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