

**R**emaining physically active as you age relies on strong bones, flexible joints and powerful muscles. Follow these guidelines to maintain joint and bone health. For best results, combine with a healthy diet and VitaMedica's *Glucosamine Sulfate*, *Bromelain with Quercetin* and *Super EPA/DHA Fish Oil* nutraceuticals.

- 1. Follow an Anti-Inflammatory Diet.** This style of eating features natural, whole foods including Omega-3 polyunsaturated fats; lean poultry and fish; nuts, legumes and seeds; and fruits and vegetables. Incorporating these healthy foods into your diet inhibits the production of pro-inflammatory prostaglandins, which in turn can provide joint pain relief.
- 2. Maintain a Healthy Weight.** An important reason to watch what you eat: years of excess body weight places unnecessary stress on the joints, increases the likelihood of injury and decreases mobility. Extra pounds also fuels the inflammatory response. The good news? If you follow the anti-inflammatory diet, you will most likely lose weight in the process.
- 3. Spice Up Your Meals.** Many spices contain compounds that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties including ginger, curcumin (turmeric), black pepper, cinnamon, rosemary, basil, cardamom, chives, cilantro, cloves, garlic and parsley. Add cinnamon to your oatmeal and spice up meals with curry, curcumin, garlic and ginger.
- 4. Boost Your Phytonutrient Intake.** Fruits and vegetables are loaded with fiber, vitamins and minerals but they also contain phytonutrients with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Deeply colored fruits like raspberries, blackberries, blueberries and pomegranate are the most concentrated in these nutrients and can easily be added to yogurt, oatmeal and salads.
- 5. Increase Your Omega-3 Fat Intake.** The Omega-3 fats include ALA (Alpha-linolenic acid), EPA (Eicosapentaenoic Acid) and DHA (Docosahexaenoic Acid). Omega-3 fats promote the formation of "favorable" or anti-inflammatory prostaglandins. Flax seeds and walnuts are an excellent source of ALA. Grind flax seeds and add 1 tablespoon to yogurt or smoothies. Add walnuts to fruit and salads. Deep, cold water fish like salmon are an excellent source of EPA and DHA. Eat this type of fish at least twice a week. Augment your diet with 1-2 grams of a high-quality fish oil supplement daily.
- 6. Reduce your Omega-6 Fat Intake.** Americans typically obtain an adequate amount of Omega-6 fats in their diet. This is because these fats, which are derived from plants such as soybean, corn and safflower, are widely available in the food supply. In general, dietary consumption of Omega-6 fats leads to the "unfavorable" or inflammatory prostaglandins. Most packaged, processed foods contain partially-hydrogenated soy bean or corn oil. Replace these foods with complex carbohydrates like fruits and vegetables. Make your own salad dressing using olive oil, balsamic vinegar and a bit of honey.
- 7. Develop a Moderate Exercise Program.** Exercise not only helps maintain strength and flexibility but keeps you feeling positive. A good exercise program should involve three elements: resistance training to strengthen muscles; aerobics to condition the heart and lungs; and flexibility to keep the joints limber. Some exercises such as running put tremendous stress on the joints. Better options include resistance training with light weights or bands, walking, swimming and yoga.

8. **Allow Time to Rest & Relax.** While moderate exercise is beneficial for the joints, knowing when to rest your body so that it can recover is also important. Be careful not to overdo exercise, and listen to your body if you need rest. Rest also helps to reduce joint inflammation and fight fatigue.
9. **Cover Gaps in Your Diet.** Calcium, magnesium, boron and vitamins D and K are important for bone and joint health. The ideal is to obtain these nutrients from food. But, government studies indicate that more two-thirds of Americans do not obtain adequate intake of calcium. Taking a high-quality multi-vitamin is a good insurance plan to cover gaps in your diet.
10. **Supplement with Bromelain.** Bromelain is an enzyme extracted from pineapple. Bromelain is a natural anti-inflammatory and can provide relief for inflammatory conditions such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.
11. **If you Smoke, Quit.** One more reason to quit smoking is that this unhealthy habit contributes to weak bones.
12. **Limit Your Alcohol Intake.** While a glass a day of red wine may offer health benefits, any more than two drinks a day raises your risk for osteoporosis. Researchers theorize that alcohol may interfere with calcium absorption and decrease bone formation.
13. **Prevent Falls & Injuries.** Previous joint injury increases the risk later on for developing arthritis. The best plan is to avoid falls and injuries in the first place. Remove items at the workplace and in your home (e.g., loose cords) that can cause you to trip easily and fall. Wear protective gear when engaging in sports activities e.g., wrist guards for rollerblading.
14. **Actively Manage Stress.** Stress can have a negative physical and emotional impact. Participation in breathing exercises and muscle relaxation techniques may help ease pain and improve sleep patterns.
15. **Make Monitoring Routine.** If you're experiencing joint pain, discomfort, and swelling be sure to schedule an appointment you're your doctor. Even if you're not having any problems, visit your doctor regularly to check bone density and hormone levels, especially if you are at an increased risk for osteoporosis. Knowing these numbers can help you and your physician develop and appropriate preventative plan.