


## Prevent Falls and Fractures

Having strong and healthy bones is important as we age. Osteopenia and osteoporosis (defined on the next page) are not inevitable! By taking some simple steps, we can reduce the risk of falls and bone fractures to enjoy a safer, more confident lifestyle.



- **Stay active.** Do regular strength exercises to stimulate bone-building cells and increase bone health and density and practice balance exercises to reduce the risk of falls.
- **Eat for bone health.** Get enough calcium and vitamin D to support bone health and density. Ask your doctor what's right for your needs.
- **Make your home safer to reduce the risk of falls.** Secure loose mats or rugs, install handrails or grab bars, keep regularly used items at an easy-to-reach level, and check that your stair handrails are sturdy and secure.
- **Avoid smoking and limit alcohol.** Smoking cigarettes can decrease blood supply to the bones and slow production of bone-building cells. Heavy alcohol consumption can decrease vitamin and mineral absorption into the bones, which slows bone formation and repair.
- **Care for your vision.** Keep glasses clean, use caution with bifocals on stairs, and wear sunglasses to reduce glare.
- **Choose comfortable shoes with good support** and non-slip soles for stability.

Learn more at [\*\*FallsFreeWI.org\*\*](https://FallsFreeWI.org).

## Bone Health & Falls


**Osteopenia** is the stage before osteoporosis, when bone density is lower than normal and the risk of osteoporosis is higher. We can reduce our risk by strengthening our bones and asking our doctor for a bone density test.

**Osteoporosis** is a disease that causes bones in the spine and limbs to lose density and strength over time. This can lead to pain and make daily activities harder. The risk increases as we age and is more common in women.

### How are Falls and Bone Health Linked?

Weaker bones break more easily—sometimes slowly over time, or suddenly after a fall. Once one fracture happens, the chance of another goes up. Osteoporosis and muscle weakness are closely connected, and inactivity can further increase the risk of falls, fractures, and loss of balance.

Osteoporosis in the spine may also cause posture changes, such as a curved upper back, which can make daily activities more difficult or painful.



Learn more about bone health from the Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation at [AmericanBoneHealth.org/density](https://www.AmericanBoneHealth.org/density) and use the Fracture Risk Calculator to find your risk: [AmericanBoneHealth.org/ncoafrc](https://www.AmericanBoneHealth.org/ncoafrc).

