



Musculoskeletal Changes & Bone Health during Peri/Post Menopause

Musculoskeletal changes during perimenopause and beyond are influenced by estrogen receptors present in muscle, bone, and ligaments. Hormonal fluctuations during perimenopause can lead to a gradual reduction in muscle mass, starting in the early thirties and accelerating at a rate of 0.7% per year.

After the age of 60, this loss of muscle mass accelerates even further. This can result in reduced strength, increased joint pain, and tendon stiffness for women. Common issues during this period include back pain, frozen shoulder, gluteal tendinopathy, plantar fasciitis, and carpal tunnel problems.

Osteoporosis is a condition characterized by reduced bone density and increases the risk of fractures. Normally, bones undergo continuous remodelling and old bone is replaced with new bone. In osteoporosis, this balance between bone formation and breakdown is disrupted, leading to gradual weakening of bones.

The progression of osteoporosis is often slow and symptom-free in its early stages. Many individuals only become aware of it when they experience fractures or undergo bone density testing. It's important to note that our peak bone mass is reached by age 30, and we cannot create more as we age; we can only maintain it.

Physiotherapy is vital for managing osteoporosis, enhancing bone health, preventing falls and fractures, and improving quality of life. Key benefits include:

- **Exercise Prescription:** Personalized exercise programs, including weight-bearing and resistance exercises, help strengthen bones and muscles. Strength training at least 2 days/week is recommended, with incremental weight increases.
- **Posture and Body Mechanics:** Proper posture and safe movement techniques are crucial to prevent falls and fractures in individuals with osteoporosis.
- **Fall Prevention:** Physiotherapy includes balance and stability training to reduce fall risk and improve reaction times to hazards.
- **Pain Management:** Techniques like manual therapy, stretching, and temperature therapies can alleviate pain and enhance joint mobility.
- **Breathing Exercises:** Breathing exercises improve lung function and reduce respiratory complications in some osteoporosis patients.
- **Patient Education:** Educating patients about osteoporosis, risk factors, and strategies for prevention and active living is essential.
- **Assistive Devices:** Assessing and providing assistive devices like walking aids or braces can enhance mobility and reduce fall risk.

Collaboration with healthcare teams, including physiotherapists, is vital to develop a comprehensive management plan tailored to individual needs. Medical advice is crucial before starting any exercise, especially for those with fractures or other medical conditions. Your physiotherapist and family doctor can give you the confidence to make changes.

Contact Information



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