



*Melio*Guide™

The Guide to Stronger Bones

Daily Activities for Better Bones

**How to Protect Your Bones—Everyday During Your
Daily Activities**

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Daily Activities

At MelioGuide, we want to provide you with the practical information that you need to reduce your risk of fracture. In our Fall Prevention section we identify things that you can do to reduce your chance of a fall.

In this section we focus on your daily activities and describe how you should do certain tasks in a safe manner.

Before you go to the individual daily activity categories, here are a few points to keep in mind:

- The list of daily activities can be overwhelming. Pick one activity that you will focus on for a week. Within a few months you will have improved your body mechanics with all your day to day activities.
- Modifying your day-to-day activities is not a substitute for exercise.
- Good body mechanics will enhance the benefits of your exercise program.
- Regardless of the stage of bone health, good body mechanics are important in the prevention of back pain and injury.
- If you have osteoporosis, good body mechanics will help prevent compression fractures of your spine.

If you have other conditions such as knee pain that make it difficult to practice good body mechanics you may want to consider the following devices:

- A reacher – which has pinchers, a hook and usually a magnet at the end of the device.
- A long-handled shoehorn and elastic shoelaces.
- A long-handled bath brush.

Yardwork

Raking

Keep the rake close to you and use your legs to follow the raking motion rather than using your back and arms alone.

Remember to keep your feet pointing in the direction of your reach to avoid twisting.



Safe



Unsafe

Planting and Weeding

Use of kneepads will encourage you to kneel. You could even consider a wheeled stool. Long handled tools are helpful if you have a deeper reach.



Safe



Safe



Unsafe

Shoveling

Keep the shovel close to you and use your body weight and legs to push the snow/dirt rather than using your back and arms alone.

Always move your feet first in the direction you are moving the snow or dirt to avoid twisting.



Safe



Unsafe

Mowing

Push the mower with your legs rather than your arms and back. As you push the mower forward keep it close to your body.



Safe



Unsafe

Housework

Using the Washer and Dryer

Place the basket in a location that makes it possible to load and unload without bending or twisting.



Safe



Unsafe

Dusting and Cleaning

Keep all your work close to you. Use a long-handled duster. Climb ladders only when there is someone else around to support the bottom of the ladder and never stand on the top step.

Sweeping

Keep the broom close to you and use your legs to shift the broom rather than using your back. Use a long handled dustpan.



Safe

Vacuumping

Keep the vacuum close to you and use your legs to shift the vacuum rather than using your back.



Safe



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Ironing

Adjust your ironing board so that you can stand tall. When ironing more than one or two items place one foot on a small stool to relax your back.



Safe



Unsafe

Kitchen

Using Dishwasher

Place dishes to be loaded on the counter then kneel, lunge or squat to load the dishes. When unloading, place dishes onto the counter before you take them to the cupboards.

A golfer's lift as shown in the photo below is also a good option.



Safe



Unsafe



Safe – Golfer's Lift

Refrigerator

Keep your frequently used heavier items on shelves that are at waist level. Bend your knees or squat down to reach the vegetable and fruit trays.

If you're in the market for a new refrigerator consider one with a bottom freezer.



Safe



Unsafe

Counter Work

For standing jobs, the ideal counter top height is 2 to 4 inches below elbow level. When sitting the ideal height is elbow level.



Safe



Unsafe

Washing Dishes

When washing dishes open a lower cupboard door and place one foot on the shelf. If your very tall, place a washtub on a turned over pot or on another tub (turned over) to bring the dish washing closer to you.



Safe



Unsafe

Oven

Bend your knees if you have a low oven.

Do not twist or bend your back.



Safe



Unsafe

High Shelves

It is always safest to pick up items no higher than shoulder height, especially heavy items. Use a sturdy stool (with a handle). Also as the item is taken from the shelf shift your weight from your front foot to your back foot.



Safe



Unsafe

Low Shelves

You can consider a lazy susan or pull out shelf to keep items within reach. Squat or kneel down for heavier items. For lighter items you can do a golfer's lift or bend from your hips with one hand on either our thighs or something sturdy.

Bathroom

Brushing Your Teeth

Instead of leaning over the sink, consider using a cup that you can spit into.

Also open the cupboard to rest your foot. This will keep you standing tall!



Safe



Unsafe

Washing Your Face

Instead of leaning over the sink consider using a washcloth or towellettes. You can also consider putting one foot up in the cupboard- this transfers weight to your legs instead of your back.



Safe



Safe



Unsafe

Cleaning the Tub

Placing a mat down will encourage you to kneel. Transfer weight onto one hand as you wash with the other hand. Get the hard to reach areas with a long-handled sponge or brush.



Safe



Unsafe

In the Bathroom

Taking a Shower

Standing in the shower is safer than getting into the tub. If standing is a problem you can consider a shower chair and a hand-held shower.

Using the toilet

Place your toilet paper where you can reach it without twisting. If you cannot easily get on and off the toilet you may want to consider a raised toilet seat.

Getting dressed

If you have balance problems sit while putting on pants and stand just to pull them up. When putting on your shoes consider crossing your foot over the opposite knee. If you are unable to get your foot across your opposite knee you may long-handled shoehorn and elastic shoelaces.

Bedroom

In and Out of Bed

Sideways method: Sitting on the edge of your bed lower yourself onto your side as you raise your legs onto the bed.

Hand and knees method to get in: From your hands and knees lower yourself to your forearms then your hips. Roll to your side or back from here.



Safe



Safe



Safe

Reading in Bed

Reading in bed is not recommended but if you must we suggest that you sit as tall as possible and use a pillow on your lap to hold your reading material at a better height.



Safe



Unsafe

Turning in Bed

It is less stressful on your back to roll as a unit.

Roll both your hips and shoulders at the same time. You should first bend your knees. Take a nice deep breath, then as you exhale tighten your tummy muscles as you roll to your side.



Safe



Safe



Unsafe

Lying in Bed

Lying on your back is the position of least compression. You should use the minimal amount of head support and a pillow under your thighs. You can also consider a small rolled up towel the width and thickness of your hand placed in the small of your back. This is a good position to rest in during the day especially if you have a forward head posture.

Lying on your side can be a good position as long as you do not curl into a fetal position, which reinforces a slouched posture. Placing a pillow between your knees and ankles will reduce the rotation strain on your back. The pillow under your head should be thick enough that it keeps your head in line with your trunk.

Lying on your stomach can be good for your back but is hard on your neck. It is a good position for short rests or napping but not good for the whole night.

You can try sleeping in the recovery position as shown here.

- Place the bottom arm behind your back and bend your top knee up towards your waist.
- Use the end of your pillow to allow your neck to stay in alignment with your breastbone.



Safe



Safe



Safe

Safe Sex

When you have osteoporosis, the term "safe sex" takes on a new meaning; quite different than the one you have probably used in the past.

As a rule, you should practice sexual positions that do not put you into positions of flexion (i.e., a slouched posture or stance). Specifically, if you are at a high fracture risk, the following are a few suggested positions that will allow you to enjoy sex without the concern of a possible fracture:

For the woman:

- Lying side by side with your partner
- On your hands and knees (i.e. all fours)
- Sitting in your partner's lap with your hands behind you so that you avoid leaning forward
- On top of your partner

For the man:

- Lying side by side with your partner
- In a kneeling position behind your partner (who would be on her hands and knees)
- On top of your partner

(Sorry, no pictures in this section. You can use your imagination.)

Making a Bed

Get down on one knee when putting your fitted bottom sheet on. If you are buying new sheets consider extra-depth fitted sheets to make the job easier. Consider using light bedding such as a duvet or down comforter. If one side of your bed is against the wall kneel on your bed rather than bend over it.



Safe



Unsafe

General

Sitting

Most of us equate sitting with “relaxing”. However, while this may be true for your legs, it may necessarily be the case for your back. Sitting is an activity that causes the greatest compression on your spine.

The following are a few simple things to improve your sitting experience:

When working at your computer or sitting at the table to read the paper, bend forward from your hips and not from your back.

The use of a chair with the seat pan that tilts forward will help.

When relaxed, as in watching TV, you are best off in a firm recliner type chair.



Safe



Unsafe



Safe



Unsafe

Sitting to Standing

Do this in two steps. Start by scooting forward in your chair before rising up. This will help you move from your hips and knees rather than your back. Do the same thing in reverse making sure you reach back to ensure the chair is there for you to sit on!



Scoot to the edge



Sit tall and push up with legs



Safe



Safe



Unsafe

Lifting

When lifting keep the following tips in mind:

- Keep the item your lifting as close to your body as possible (preferably against your body).
- Keep your feet at least shoulder width apart to be more stable.
- Bend your knees for lower items.
- Do not twist or bend your back.
- Turn your feet before your body. Let your feet lead the way.
- It is safer to push rather than pull.
- If you must carry heavy loads such as a suitcase make it two smaller bags to even out the load.



Safe



Unsafe

Car

In and Out of the Car

Rather than bending and twisting, consider sitting at the edge facing out then slide one foot in at a time without twisting your back. Reverse the process when getting out of the car.



Safe



Unsafe

Driving the Car

If your car has lumbar support take advantage of it. If not, consider purchasing a lumbar support that you keep in the car.

Adjust your rearview mirror while you are in your best posture so that every time you check your rearview mirror, you'll be reminded to sit up tall.



Safe



Unsafe

Using Car Trunk

Slide items close to you and get yourself as close to the car as possible before lifting.

Consider asking for help for larger items. For smaller items you can use a golfer's reach and one hand for support.



Safe



Unsafe

Children

Picking Up a Child

Squat down and bring the baby/child as close to you as possible before picking him/her up.



Safe



Unsafe

Feeding Baby

Consider using a pillow under the baby and under your elbow so that you are sitting up straight.



Safe



Unsafe

Putting Baby into a Car Seat

Get as close as you can to the car seat. Place one knee on the back seat if possible. Also if the child is old enough let them climb in themselves so that you need only assist with the buckle.



Safe



Unsafe

Getting Baby In and Out of Crib

When moving baby in and out of a crib, get as close as possible and be sure to lower the side rail.

Changing Diapers

To avoid bending your back, change the baby from a surface that is at elbow height.



Safe



Safe



Unsafe



Unsafe

Bathing Baby

Placing a mat down will encourage you to kneel. Using a seat for the baby, transfer weight onto one hand as you wash with the other hand.

Pets

Walking Your Dog

Consider a gentle leader leash to avoid having your dog pull you. The sudden forward pull places a lot of strain on your back and can put you at risk for a fall.

Grooming Your Pet

When brushing our cat or dog place them onto a higher surface that will allow you to groom them without bending forward from your back. The other choice is to kneel on the floor beside them.



Safe



Unsafe

Transporting Your Pet

When lifting your pet either with or without a carrier always keep them against your body. The weight of a carrier and pet can place a lot of strain on your back. So keep them close!

Feeding Your Pet

If you have a cat, consider keeping the bowls on a higher surface that allows the cat to jump up rather having you bend to the floor. With dogs you can consider the bowl holders that elevate the dog dishes by a few inches. As with lifting any item you can squat, or else use the golfer's lift.