



## **DYNAMIC AGING**

### ***Building Bone***

In the last article, we emphasized that bone is a living tissue and requires regular stimulation from physical activity. You either "use it" or you "lose it". There are two primary types of exercise for building strong bones: weight bearing activities and resistance training.

Weight bearing activity is exactly as it sounds: it is done while on your feet, so that your bones are supporting your weight. Jogging, hiking, aerobics, climbing stairs, and walking are a few examples. The bones in the lower spine, hips, and legs are worked to help reduce mineral loss.

What is resistance training? Resistance training, also called strength training, uses different types of resistance to strengthen muscles and bones. Examples are the use of free weights, weight machines, elastic bands, and water exercises.

A general recommendation for seniors is 20 to 30 minutes of weight bearing exercise, three to five days per week, along with strength training. According to the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, "since illnesses, osteoporosis and other age/health related conditions may affect your body's performance levels, it's important to work with a physician to develop a program that is specific to your body and its needs."

In the last article, we emphasized some free public exercise programs available in the area. There are also several venues in our region that offer senior discounts for both weight bearing and strength training exercise programs. Although they are too numerous to mention in this column, they are detailed in the new free Senior Health Guide, which is now available. The Guide also contains senior meal sites, local food pantries, and the Food Guide Pyramid. My next column will expand on the use of the Food Guide Pyramid as a tool for maintaining and building strong bones.

The Senior Health Guide has been mailed to local health care providers and is also available through town recreation departments, the Bridgton Community Center, local churches, and senior meal sites. If you cannot locate a copy, please contact me and I'll make sure you receive one!