

## Health Bulletin for Youth

This publication compiled and edited by the H.E.E.L. Program  
(Health Education through Extension Leadership) Staff

Cooperative Extension Service

# Build Your Bones

Have you ever thought about what it is that holds you up when you are sitting or standing? That's right, it is your bones. Your bones fit together to form your skeleton. The skeleton is important because it gives your body shape and structure. With the help of muscles, the skeleton helps you to move such as when you are walking or running.

This is a big job. The skeleton does so much for your body. This is why it is so important to keep your bones strong as you grow so that they can continue to help your body move.

### **Strong Bones**

There are two main ways to make bones strong:

- Weight-bearing physical activity
- Eating foods high in calcium

### ***What is weight-bearing physical activity?***

Regular physical activity can keep you healthy and some activities also help to build your bones. These types of activities are called weight-bearing. Weight-bearing means you are on your feet and your bones are holding your body weight up. With weight-bearing activity your feet or hands 'pound' against a force such as when your feet hit the ground as you run. This type of activity causes new bone tissue to form and makes bones stronger.

Here is a list of activities that are weight-bearing and some that are not. Remember that all physical activity is good for you. Don't cut out activities that are not weight-bearing, just add in some weight-bearing activities to your normal routine to help your bones grow stronger.



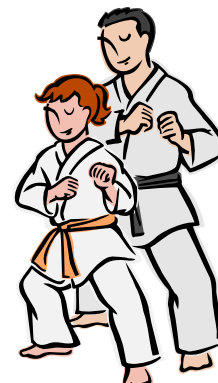
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**Weight-bearing Activities**

- Jumping rope
- Running
- Soccer
- Dancing
- Hopscotch
- Karate

**Activities That Are Not Weight-bearing**

- Biking
- Swimming
- Riding a Scooter

**Where does calcium come from?**

Calcium comes from the foods we eat. This calcium is carried in the blood and used to harden bones making them stronger. Foods that are good sources of calcium can sometimes be called calcium-rich. Some examples of calcium-rich foods include low-fat dairy products such as milk and yogurt. Low fat cheese like mozzarella string cheese is a good source of calcium. Some foods are “fortified” with calcium. This means calcium doesn’t occur naturally in them, but it is added to them when they are processed. Foods that are fortified with calcium list this on the label. Some items include orange juice and soy drinks.

The key to strong bones with calcium is to get all the calcium you need each day. If you are four to eight years old you need at least two servings of calcium-rich foods each day. If you are between nine and eighteen years old, you need at least three servings of calcium rich foods each day. One cup of milk or yogurt is considered one serving.

For more information on health issues in Kentucky, please visit: [www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL](http://www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL)

**Sources:**

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: The National Bone Health Campaign

Powerful Bones. Powerful Girls.

“Bone Up: Hard Facts”

“Bone Up: How to Make Strong Bones”

“Staying Strong: Fitness Fun”

“Staying Strong: Calcium-Where To Get It”

ine at <http://www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones>.

National Institutes of Health: National Institute of Child Health & Human Development – Why Milk Matters Now for Children and Teens, available at [http://www.nichd.nih.gov/milk/milk\\_facts.htm](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/milk/milk_facts.htm).



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