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Dear [FNVar],

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family; I am very thankful to have you as my patient. I don't know about you but as the weather begins cooling down here in New England I like to think about how I am going to stay active and healthy this winter. How about you? Will you stretch, work out or exercise on foot, bike or ski as often as you can? The rewards are great – I feel better when I am active and I expect you do too. Injury or illness can lead to all sorts of imbalance, discomfort and stiffness which if left to themselves can permanently change the way we move. Don't let foot or ankle problems get in the way of your activities. Call my office anytime if you have questions.

My footnotes this month are about Osteoporosis (check out the video), Balance, Stretching and Orthotics. All important things to know about if you want to stay active this winter, as I'm sure you do!

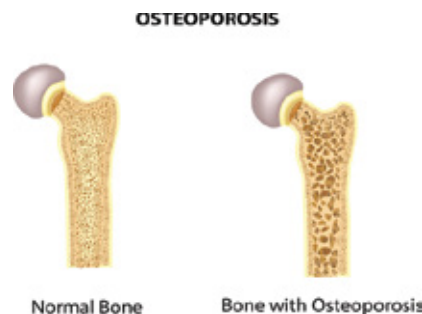
Warmly,  
Marshall L. Lukoff, DPM



## Osteoporosis and Your Feet

Osteoporosis is a degenerative bone condition where the bones become brittle and can easily break. 54 million Americans have osteoporosis, including 50% of women and 25% of men. Often individuals don't even know that they have osteoporosis until they experience a broken bone or other injury.

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## History FootNote

Female Egyptian mummies with a curved spine, indicating that they suffered from osteoporosis, have been found dating back 4,000 years.

## Celebrity Foot Focus

Ursula Andress, Blythe Danner and Sally Field all have osteoporosis. Gwyneth Paltrow has osteopenia, a condition with decreased bone density which can lead to osteoporosis.

## ....continued from page 1 **Osteoporosis and Your....**

Older individuals are susceptible to foot and ankle injuries because they generally have poor vision, reduced agility and balance issues, subjecting them to frequent falls. If they also have osteoporosis and suffer a broken bone, the bone may not heal properly resulting in lifelong pain and even disability.

Osteoporosis can also cause stress fractures, where the bone fractures from prolonged overuse. Even a daily walk can lead to stress fractures of the foot or ankle in patients with osteoporosis.

### Risk Factors for Osteoporosis

- **Age** - as we age, the material in bones tends to be reabsorbed by the body instead of the body producing more bone.
- **Gender** - women are more likely to have osteoporosis than men.
- **Body type** - larger people tend to acquire more bone mass in their youth. Those with smaller body frames are more likely to suffer from osteoporosis.
- **Diet** lacking in calcium and vitamin D.
- **Other** - excessive use of tobacco or alcohol can cause osteoporosis, as can a sedentary lifestyle and long-term use of steroid medications.

### Treatment for Those with Osteoporosis

Many modern medications for osteoporosis can stimulate new bone growth as well as prevent further bone loss. Ask your doctor if these can work for you.

Protect your feet if you have osteoporosis by wearing shoes even around the house to avoid breaking your toes. Most in-home falls occur with individuals going barefoot or wearing only socks.

Remove anything in your home or yard that can cause a fall, such as loose throw rugs, electrical wires or lawn furniture. Provide good lighting and handrails for stairways.

### Exercise with Osteoporosis.

Diminishing stress on the spine is essential if you have low bone density. The following video from the National Osteoporosis Foundation website has a great pilates-based movement video about correct lifting techniques that prevent injuries.

<https://www.nof.org/patients/fracturesfall-prevention/safe-movement-exercise-videos/>

### Preventing Osteoporosis

Prevent osteoporosis before it happens:

- Improve your diet by including calcium-rich choices such as low-fat dairy foods, dark green vegetables and nuts.
- Talk to your doctor about calcium and vitamin D supplements.
- Increase your exercise especially weight-bearing and strengthening workouts.
- Reduce alcohol consumption and stop smoking.

## Improving Balance

Improving balance begins with a tripod--the three different sensors that form your personal gyroscope. Your inner ear, perception from your eyes, and joint and muscle-nerve receptors called proprioceptors combine to give you balance. If one of these elements goes out of whack, you'll likely teeter. ...contd. on pg. 3

## Joke of the month



**Dr. Lukoff:** What do you get when you cross a turkey with a centipede?

**Patient:** Tell me.

**Dr. Lukoff:** Drumsticks for everyone on Thanksgiving Day!

## Trivia

**Here are some lesser known facts about the NFL's holiday tradition.**

- The New England Patriots have played the Thanksgiving Classic five times and have won three of those games.
- The Carolina Panthers and Jacksonville Jaguars have never played on Thanksgiving Day. The Houston Texans made their first franchise appearance in 2012 vs. the Lions.
- The Detroit Lions have the most wins on Thanksgiving (34), as well as the most losses (38).
- The tradition of the Detroit Lions playing on Thanksgiving Day began in 1934. The Lions have played on every Thanksgiving Day since 1934, except during 1941-1944 when no games were played due to WWII.



## ....continued from page 2 **Improving Balance**

"Think about when you get out of bed at night in the dark," says Harvey W. Wallmann, a doctor of physical therapy science and an associate professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "Some people are very vision dominant. You don't have your vision, so you'll likely wobble until you see a glint of light."

Also, for example, if you injure an ankle it diminishes the capability of the proprioceptors in that area to assist with balance. "You have to challenge your sensory system to force yourself out of your comfort zone," he says. "Once strengthened, you'll have better body control and be more likely to avoid falls and injuries."

### Balance Exercises to Try

To improve balance, Wallmann often recommends exercises that remove one of the tripod legs to help strengthen the others. Here are four he suggests:

#### Single-leg Stand

Stand with your legs slightly less than shoulder-width apart near a support such as a wall or railing. Balance as you lift one leg, and then close your eyes. Maintain your balance for 30 to 60 seconds, and repeat with the other leg.

#### Trunk Turns

Stand with your legs slightly wider than shoulder-width apart on a mini trampoline. (No mini trampoline? A soft gym mat or other squishy surface will also work.) Hold an exercise ball, or a 5 or 10 pound weight chest high in both hands. Twist at your trunk to face your right. Return to center, then twist to your left and back to center. Repeat 10 to 20 times.

#### Single-leg Squat

Stand on a sturdy 6- to 8-inch-high stool or step, with your right leg off the stool to the side. Bend your left leg as you do a squat until your right leg barely touches the ground. Do two sets of five to 10 reps on each leg.

#### March in the Dark

In a room with plenty of space and no obstacles that could bump knees or cause you to trip, march in place 60 to 100 steps with your eyes closed.



### Custom Orthotics - Biomechanics and Balance

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....continued on page 4



## ....continued from page 3 **Improving Balance**

Research has shown that 70% of patients tested showed moderate to severe abnormalities when walking. Whatever caused your faulty biomechanics and subsequent foot or ankle pain, a custom designed pair of orthotics can help. Orthotics also relieve lower leg tendonitis (problem with the Achilles and posterior tibia tendon, and "shin splints") and knee pain, such as chondromalacia patellae, iliotibial band syndrome and "runner's knee."

**Most foot orthotics will last five to 10 years**, and need to be changed if outgrown by one-and-a-half shoe sizes, or you have had foot surgery or other trauma to the feet, or if you have arthritis in your feet. Some insurance companies (not all) may cover a portion of treatment costs. The devices may need to be recovered every two to four years. We recommend our patients come in for adjustments as needed and every two years for an orthotic check.



## **Be Sure To Warm Up and Stretch Before Your Workout To Prevent Injury**

Were you inspired by the Rio Summer Olympics to recommit to your workouts? Congratulations! Regular exercise can help reduce your weight and improve your cardiovascular health as well as lessen your risk of type 2 diabetes and some cancers, strengthen bones and muscles and improve your mental outlook.

To prevent injury, whether you are beginning an exercise program or are a veteran athlete, it's essential to warm up and do some mild stretches before beginning your activities:

- Never stretch cold muscles. Warm yourself up with 3-5 minutes of walking in place or doing a slow jog.
- Stick to dynamic stretches with slow, controlled movements before a workout, rather than holding a stretch. In other words, keep moving! Try these for about 30 seconds each, and repeat twice:
  - Take a few steps lifting your legs straight out in front of you to stretch the hamstrings.
  - Bring your knees up toward your chest as you jog or walk.
  - Try to kick yourself in the butt while walking or jogging.
- If you're a yoga buff, try 2 minutes of sun salutations as dynamic stretches before a workout. You can make the downward-facing dog movement dynamic by lifting alternate legs or pedaling your feet.



Don't forget your upper body too! Lift your arms and stretch side to side. Slowly swing arms in circles in both directions.

Static stretches, where you hold a stretch for several seconds, are most beneficial **after** your workout to lengthen muscles and improve flexibility. Only hold the stretch to the point of slight discomfort - if it hurts, you're pushing too hard.

## Recipe of the Month

# Mexican Pumpkin Punch

Here's a great recipe for your Thanksgiving gathering. Perfect for the fall holidays!

### Ingredients

- 2 cups packed dark brown sugar
- 4 cinnamon sticks, preferably Mexican
- 1 29-ounce can pure pumpkin (about 3 1/2 cups)
- 2 limes
- Splash of rum (optional)
- Pineapple chunks and/or pecans, for serving (optional)

### Directions

- Combine 12 cups water, the brown sugar and cinnamon sticks in a large pot and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Stir in the pumpkin and return to a simmer.

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Meanwhile, remove the zest from the limes in wide strips using a vegetable peeler; add the zest to the pot and simmer 15 minutes. Let cool, then refrigerate until the liquid is cold and the pumpkin pulp settles to the bottom, 2 to 3 hours.

- Working in batches, ladle the liquid into a fine-mesh strainer set over a pitcher (repeat if necessary to strain out all the pumpkin pulp). Discard the pulp and lime zest. Return the cinnamon sticks to the punch and refrigerate until ready to serve.
- Pour the punch into ice-filled glasses. Add rum, pineapple and/or pecans, if desired. Serve with the cinnamon sticks.

Photograph by Andrew Mccaul, Recipe courtesy of Food Network Magazine

