

## Physiotherapy Management of Osteoporosis

**A considerable body of clinical evidence confirms the benefits of physiotherapy in the management of osteoporosis and osteopenia, with interventions to relieve pain, improve physical function, and assist in the prevention of fractures.**

Osteoporosis and related fractures are increasingly common conditions with which patients present to a physiotherapist. Evidence-based research continues to assert the effectiveness of physiotherapy interventions in the management of both osteoporosis and osteopenia. Timely access to physiotherapy services can delay disease progression, reduce the likelihood of fractures, and assist in prevention of further problems.

The physiotherapists in our practice integrate clinical expertise with evidence-based research, in the assessment and management of movement disorders.

APA physiotherapists are highly qualified professionals with expert knowledge in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of movement disorders. All APA physiotherapists must participate in continuing professional development to stay up to date with the latest in physiotherapy techniques and leading research-based treatment.

The highly skilled physiotherapists in our practice can prescribe tailored exercise programs for patients with osteoporosis (or at risk of developing the condition). These techniques can increase physical activity and function without aggravating any coexisting problems.

We also provide realistic advice to encourage self-management and build patient confidence to make daily decisions to cope with their condition.

*APA physiotherapists are qualified professionals with expert knowledge and skills in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions. All APA physiotherapists must participate in continuing professional development to keep them up to date with the latest in physiotherapy techniques and leading research-based treatment.*

### References

- Australian Physiotherapy Association (2006). APA evidence-based clinical statement: Therapeutic Exercise in Physiotherapy.
- Australian Physiotherapy Association (2004). APA position statement: Falls prevention.
- Campbell, AJ et al (1999). 'Falls prevention over 2 years: a randomized controlled trial in women 80 years and older', *Age and Ageing* 28:213-518
- National Ageing Research Institute (2004). An analysis of research on preventing falls and falls injury in older people: Community, residential care and hospital settings. The Cochrane Library, Issue 3, 2001. Oxford: Update Software
- BMJ 2004;328:680-3
- Gerontology, 2003 Mar-Apr;49(2):93-116
- BC Medical Journal, 2003 November;45(9):449-455
- Evidence Briefing: Effectiveness of falls prevention and rehabilitation strategies in older people: implications for physiotherapy. Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, UK, 2001.



## Management & Prevention of Falls

**Physiotherapy is an essential part of the multidisciplinary approach needed to manage falls in older people or high risk groups. Recent research confirms that regular supervised exercise programs targeting balance, strength and coordination can substantially reduce the risk of falling.**

According to a recent Cochrane Library systematic review, interventions likely to be beneficial in preventing falls include muscle component based group exercise programs as well as individually prescribed home-based muscle strengthening and balance retraining, by a trained health professional.

A 2004 systematic review of 40 randomized clinical trials showed that a multifactorial falls risk assessment and management program was the most effective component of a falls prevention program, followed by exercise as the next most effective component.

An evidence briefing from the UK Chartered Society of Physiotherapy reports, "overall, available evidence strongly supports the use of physiotherapists in fall prevention, either as part of a multifactorial fall prevention team, or in higher risk groups, by therapy alone."

In a 2003 systematic review of evidence-based guidelines for falls prevention, strong evidence was found for balance exercises and for home-based physiotherapy programs for women over 80, regardless of their risk factor status. A study published in the British Columbia Medical Journal showed that a 12-week program designed to improve lower-body function was also able to improve the static balance and overall wellbeing of women aged 70-86.

Every day, physiotherapists across Australia assess and treat older adults for a range of physical challenges. Many of these people are at increased risk of falling due to mobility impairment, stroke, Parkinson's Disease or dizziness. Regardless of whether or not a patient has had a fall, a physiotherapist will assess the person's postural stability, muscular strength and risk of falling, and will offer the appropriate physiotherapy treatment and exercise prescription.



***Working together with physicians and occupational therapists, the highly trained APA physiotherapists in this practice can help reduce falls among older patients and prevent the medical, emotional and economic consequences.***

### Contact details

Energize Physiotherapy Clinical Pilates  
Level 1 32 Chester Street,  
Oakleigh, VIC, 3166  
P 03 9569 5799  
F 03 9569 4977  
E [info@energizestudio.com.au](mailto:info@energizestudio.com.au)  
W [www.energizestudio.com.au](http://www.energizestudio.com.au)