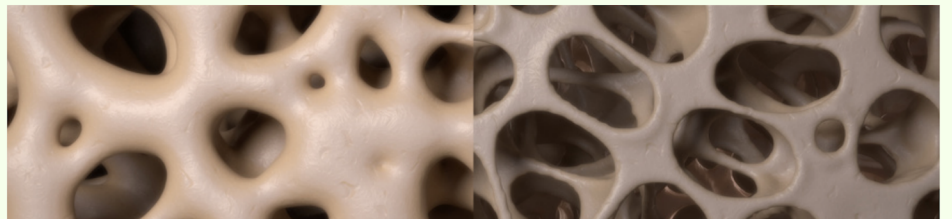
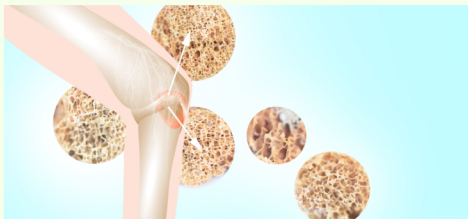


WELCOME TO PHYSIOBIZ!  
HEALTHCARE ADVICE AND INFORMATION YOU CAN TRUST AND RELY ON,  
BROUGHT TO YOU BY,  
THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY!

A close-up image of a hand holding a white marker, writing the word "osteoporosis" in a large, black, cursive script on a white background.

## BREAKING DOWN OSTEOPOROSIS: YOUR GUIDE TO STRONGER BONES

Osteoporosis is a bone disease that develops when bone mineral density and bone mass decrease, or when the quality or structure of bone changes. This can lead to a decrease in bone strength, increasing the risk of broken bones.

**"Osteoporosis is not an inevitable part of aging; it is preventable. So it is vital for all of us, of all ages start taking care of our bones, now before it is too late." - Camilla Parker Bowles**

### SYMPTOMS

Osteoporosis is called a 'silent' disease because there are typically no symptoms until a bone is broken. Symptoms of vertebral fracture include severe back pain, loss of height, or spine malformations such as a stooped or hunched posture.

Bones affected by osteoporosis may become so fragile that fractures occur spontaneously or as a result of:

- Minor falls, such as a fall from standing height that would not normally cause a break in a healthy bone.
- Normal stresses, such as bending, lifting, or even coughing.

## CAUSES

Osteoporosis occurs when too much bone mass is lost and changes occur in the structure of bone tissue. Certain risk factors may lead to the development of osteoporosis or can increase the likelihood that you will develop the disease.

Factors that may increase your risk of osteoporosis include:

- **Gender:** Your chances of developing osteoporosis are greater if you are a woman. Women have lower peak bone mass and smaller bones than men. However, men are still at risk, especially after the age of 70.
- **Age:** As you age, bone loss happens more quickly, and new bone growth is slower. Over time, your bones can weaken, and your risk of osteoporosis increases.
- **Family history:** Researchers are finding that your risk of osteoporosis and fractures may increase if one of your parents has a history of osteoporosis or hip fracture.
- **Changes in hormones:** Low levels of certain hormones can increase your chances of developing osteoporosis. For example:
  - Low oestrogen levels in women after menopause.
  - Low levels of oestrogen due to the abnormal absence of menstrual periods in premenopausal women because of hormone disorders or extreme levels of physical activity.
  - Low levels of testosterone in men.
- **Diet:** Beginning in childhood and continuing into old age, a diet low in calcium and vitamin D can increase your risk of osteoporosis and fractures. Excessive dieting or poor protein intake may increase your risk of bone loss and osteoporosis.
- **Other medical conditions:** Some medical conditions that you may be able to treat or manage can increase the risk of osteoporosis, such as other endocrine and hormonal diseases, gastrointestinal diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, certain types of cancer, HIV/AIDS, and anorexia nervosa.



## REHABILITATION

Regular exercise can strengthen your bones (as well as all the tissues connected to them, like your muscles, tendons, and ligaments). Your physiotherapist might suggest weight-bearing exercises to strengthen your muscles and improve your balance. Exercises that make your body work against gravity, like walking, yoga, Pilates, and tai chi, can improve your strength and balance without putting too much stress on your bones. Your physiotherapist is able to assist you in designing an exercise program that will aid in obtaining the best quality of life with osteoporosis.

