



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SAFE MOVEMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH OSTEOPOROSIS

...and how you can apply them to your yoga practice!

By Susan Anderson, C-IAYT





YOGA AND EXERCISE GUIDELINES FOR PEOPLE WITH OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis Canada's *Too Fit to Fracture: Managing Osteoporosis through Exercise* recommends four types of exercise for people with osteoporosis and osteopenia (low bone density):

- Strength Training,
- Posture Exercises,
- Balance Exercises, and
- Aerobic Activity.

Yoga can play a role in helping you get stronger, stand taller, and be steadier on your feet. It can also help improve your flexibility, which plays a role in posture and balance. But there are some important things to know - some important principles - about *how* to hold and move your body during yoga practice so that your risk of fracture is reduced.

The good news is that many yoga poses can be modified to accommodate these principles. Your practice might look and feel different than it has in the past, but *you can* enjoy the many therapeutic benefits of yoga and honour your body by adopting these principles of safe movement.

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In late 2021, I was diagnosed with osteoporosis and have since been working to educate myself and my yoga students about how to move and practice yoga safely. You *can* do yoga if you have osteoporosis, you just need to know *how*!

Principles of Safe Movement for People with Osteoporosis

You can find the following principles, which apply to exercise movement (including yoga) and the activities of daily living, in Osteoporosis Canada's *Too Fit to Fracture: Managing Osteoporosis through Exercise*.

FOR THE SPINE:

Limit repeated or sustained, weighted, end-range, rapid or forceful, or combined:

- Flexion (forward bending)
- Rotation (twisting left or right)
- Laterally bending (side bending).

Reduce the cumulative effect of flexion, slouching, and rotations in the activities of daily living and work ergonomics.

Take care when lowering a heavy weight/object from overhead.

FOR THE HIP:

Limit forced end-range rotations. And...

If you have had surgery, **follow all post-operative movement instructions** prescribed by your surgeon including the length of time to avoid a specific movement.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR YOGA PRACTICE?

Think of it this way...

- **Be gentle** - don't push or force any pose into its end range.
- **Keep moving** - don't hold a pose for long, especially at its end range.
- **Take your time** - don't rush, especially moving into and out of a pose.
- **One thing at a time** - bend forward, bend to the side, *or* rotate. Don't do all three at the same time.

...but there's so much more!

This interpretation of the application of these principles to yoga is not endorsed by Osteoporosis Canada but is based on my Osteoporosis Canada Bone Fit™ training, yoga therapy education, and many years of personal and professional yoga practice. Work with me to develop a thorough understanding and experience of the application of these principles to your yoga practice.



Yoga Reset: Principles and Practices of Safe Yoga for People with Osteoporosis

So there you have it, exercise guidelines, the principles of safe movement for people with osteoporosis, and a brief introduction to how they apply to yoga. But the learning doesn't end here. This is just the beginning. There is a lot more to explore and experience around each principle - special practices, cueing, and considerations for yoga poses, posture, balance, and strength.

And I've developed a whole program around this!

*If you have osteoporosis, osteopenia, or are at increased risk...AND you have no yoga experience and want to learn to practice yoga safely...OR you have some yoga experience and want to learn how to modify your practice, **please contact me** at 1-613-292-5261 or susan@susanandersonyoga.com. I would love to speak with you about how we can work together!*



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Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace the advice of a doctor. If you have been diagnosed with osteoporosis or osteopenia, especially if you have had a fracture, speak to your doctor before beginning any new exercise. If you already have an established yoga practice, work with an experienced yoga teacher who is Bone Fit™ Trained. Always inform your yoga teacher if you have osteoporosis or osteopenia and if you have had a fracture.

Sources: Osteoporosis Canada and the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, *Too Fit to Fracture, managing osteoporosis through exercise*, available online at <https://osteoporosis.ca/wp-content/uploads/OC-Too-Fit-To-Fracture-Osteo-Exercise-Book.pdf>, and Osteoporosis Canada Bone Fit™ Basics training, 2021.