

Yoga for Bone Health

OLLI Eight-week Course, Spring 2024

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Recommended Props

- yoga mat
- two 9x6x4 yoga blocks
- yoga blanket or thick towel
- 10' yoga strap

Class Dates & Time

This is an eight-week course that meets 10:00-11:30 AM Saturdays, from March 2-April 20 in the Illinois room.

Course Description

Yoga for Bone Health gradually introduces all of the necessary elements for a complete yoga practice that helps holistically to build bone and muscle strength.

This progressive series has the primary objectives of accelerating increases in bone mineral density; increasing integrated muscle engagement for strength; and protecting the joints, ligaments, and tendons while stimulating the bones.

Week 1: Overview of Yoga for Bone Health

What does the research say? Can yoga really increase bone mass density? A good yoga practice starts with a solid foundation. This week will introduce foundational poses seated and standing that will serve as a basis for poses in the following weeks.

Week 2: Body Awareness - Feet, Knees, Pelvis, Spine

Yoga poses bring an awareness to proper body alignment so that we can use our bones and muscles together for optimal strength. Strong muscles help to encourage new bone growth.

Weeks 3 and 4: Strengthening the Lumbo-Pelvic Hip Complex

Two of the primary areas of focus for testing bone density are the lumbar vertebrae and femur. Strengthening the muscles in these areas also helps to strengthen the bones. Two weeks will be spent on poses that focus on these key areas.

Week 5: Strengthening the Back

A rounded back contributes to poor posture and can put the vertebrae at risk for fracture. Strengthening the back muscles helps to alleviate rounding the shoulders forward, improves posture, and stimulates the vertebrae to increase bone strength and growth.

Week 6: Abdominal Strength without Spinal Curvature

Strong abdominal and other core muscles help to stabilize the spine and pelvis. Actively engaging these core muscles helps to further stimulate the vertebrae, but exercises/yoga that round the back are not recommended. Learn yoga poses that focus on spinal extension rather than spinal flexion to help strengthen the core muscles.

Week 7: Spinal Rotation without Flexion

Safely rotating (twisting) the spine is important in everyday life. Just as important, particularly with lower bone density, is avoiding flexion (bending at the waist or rounding the upper back). Following up on key concepts learned in Week 6, Week 7 will focus on safe twists that help to stimulate the muscles and other tissues supporting the spine, which in turn help to stimulate bone remineralization.

Week 8: Consolidation & Confidence: Healthy Bones for Life

A yoga practice for healthy bones can take as little as 15 minutes a day, and has the added benefits of better posture, balance, and body awareness. A review of poses learned in weeks 1-7 comprise an achievable practice for strong bones and muscles.

Optional Reading

Research Articles:

- [COVID-19 and Bone Loss: A Review of Risk Factors, Mechanisms, and Future Directions](#)
- [Twelve-Minute Daily Yoga Regimen Reverses Osteoporotic Bone Loss](#)
- [Effects of Yogasanas on osteoporosis in postmenopausal women](#)
- [Yoga might be an alternative training for the quality of life and balance in postmenopausal osteoporosis.](#)
- [Yoga Practice for The Elderly: Good Choice to Avoid Falls](#)
- [Suggestions for Adapting Yoga to the Needs of Older Adults with Osteoporosis](#)

Other Reading:

[Yoga and Osteoporosis: The Do's and Don'ts](#), Amber Burke, Yoga International

[Yoga for Osteoporosis](#), Loren Fishman, MD, and Ellen Saltonstall

About Me

Kim Green has been practicing yoga and meditation since the 1990s. She has studied yoga for bone health and aging extensively and enjoys teaching a variety of yoga styles, self-myofascial release, and meditation. She has a particular interest in teaching yoga for strength, balance, and healthy connective tissues (including the bones). Kim teaches group yoga and self-myofascial release classes, workshops, and themed courses, and works individually with private clients. She is a Certified Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT-200; currently pursuing RYT-500), as well as a Certified Level II Reiki practitioner.