



Eating for bone and muscle health

Steve McIntosh, Master Trainer

Bones, muscles and future you

Your bones and muscles are quietly getting on with things every day. They help you lift, carry, balance, and move without much thought. Getting out of a chair, carrying bags, climbing stairs, steadying yourself on uneven ground.

All of that relies on them working well together. And while it's easy to think bone and muscle health is something to worry about later, the habits you build now matter more than you might think. The good news is that supporting them doesn't need to be complicated or strict. A few simple food habits, done most of the time, can make a real difference over the years.

Giving your bones some love

Your bones aren't fixed or lifeless. They're living tissue that's constantly breaking down and rebuilding, which means they need regular support.

Calcium is one of the main players here. Most adults need around 700 mg a day, and that doesn't have to come from one big hit. Milk or yoghurt, fortified plant milks, cheese, leafy greens, tofu, nuts, and seeds all count, and it adds up more easily than you might expect. Doctors who focus on midlife health, like Dr Louise Newson, often talk about how bone strength is shaped by everyday habits long before it becomes a problem.

Magnesium is the quieter helper. It supports bone structure and helps your body use calcium properly. Adults generally need around 300 mg a day, with slightly higher needs for men. Foods like whole grains, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, and dark leafy greens are good places to find it. If meals are rushed or quite processed, magnesium is one that can easily slip under the radar.

Vitamin D also plays a big role. Without it, calcium can't really do its job. In the UK, we don't get enough sunlight for much of the year, which is why vitamin D supplements are often recommended through the autumn and winter months.

This is something regularly highlighted in NHS guidance around bone health.

Why protein really matters

Protein often gets linked with gym culture, but it's just as important for everyday strength and staying mobile. Protein helps maintain and repair muscle, and as we get older, our bodies become less efficient at using it.

Clinicians like Dr Stacy Sims regularly point out that this is why protein needs often increase with age, not decrease, especially if you want to maintain strength and muscle mass. A useful guide for most adults is around 1.2 to 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight each day, particularly if you're active or on your feet a lot. For someone around 70 kg, that's roughly 85 to 110 grams spread across the day.

Spacing protein across meals works far better than trying to catch up at dinner. Meat, fish, eggs, dairy, beans, lentils, tofu, and yoghurt all count. It doesn't need to look perfect or be the same every day.

Why bones and muscles work better together

Bones and muscles rely on each other. Muscles place healthy stress on bones, helping keep them strong, and bones give muscles the structure they need to move you safely and confidently. Doctors who specialise in longevity, like Dr Mary Claire Haver, often talk about how protecting muscle and bone together is key to maintaining balance, independence, and quality of life as we age.

This isn't about eating perfectly or tracking every number. It's about small, realistic habits that feel doable. Look after your bones and muscles now, and future you will quietly appreciate it.

Here are some helpful links to the NHS and doctors mentioned above in the article if you would also like any other advice don't hesitate to email pt@healthoutfit.co.uk

Sources

[NHS - Vitamins and minerals](#)

[NHS - Vitamind D](#)

[Dr.Mary Claire - Haver article](#)

[Dr Louise Newson - How I keep my bones strong](#)

[Dr Stacy Sims - How much protein is enough](#)

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