

Celebrating Healthy Active Lives



A newsletter for the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults' community based member organizations



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Active Living Coalition for Older Adults **UPDATE**

ALCOA on the Move



The offices of the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults will be relocated to Brampton, Ontario as of June 25, 2007.

There are many compelling reasons for the Agency to relocate from its present office location in Leaside to the new location in Brampton. An improved professional look for the Agency; improved working conditions for staff; close proximity to the

Toronto Airport for ease of travel for Board Members, staff and visitors; decreased rental cost for the office premises combined with free services such as reception along with flexible lease terms. All combined these improvements add up to the continuing and future viability of ALCOA.

We wish to express our appreciation to Tribond Assembly Corp. for providing us with this new location at a cost significantly below market value. They say it is their way of giving back to the community and they look forward to a long and supportive relationship with ALCOA.

The new address for ALCOA is as follows:

**Active Living Coalition for Older Adults
30 Delta Park Blvd.
Brampton, Ontario
L6T 5E7**

Toll Free: 1-800-549-9799

Phone: to be advised

Fax: (905) 458-7422

Email: alcoa3@ca.inter.net

Warmest regards,

Dianne Austin

National Executive Director

**Acknowledgement of
Contribution for this Issue of
the ALCOA Newsletter**

We wish to express our appreciation to MERCK FROSST for their financial contribution towards this edition of our ALCOA newsletter. Valuable medical information can be viewed on their website at www.merckfrosst.ca

Join Us In Expressing Appreciation

Though we are excited about the move to a new office location for ALCOA at the same time we are saddened by the fact that Pat Israel has decided not to make the move with us.

Pat has been a very loyal and dedicated employee of ALCOA's for the past seven (7) years and we will miss her friendly voice at the other end of the telephone.

I'm sure you will want to join me in showing your appreciation to Pat by sending a note or email. Please forward your letters and emails to Dianne and she will insure that they are forwarded to Pat at her home.

On behalf of the past, present and future Guardians, Roundtable Members, Corresponding Members and ALCOA staff, we wish you the very best Pat in all your future endeavours.

Sincerely,

Jack Brownell
ALCOA Chair



Fight for Your Bones

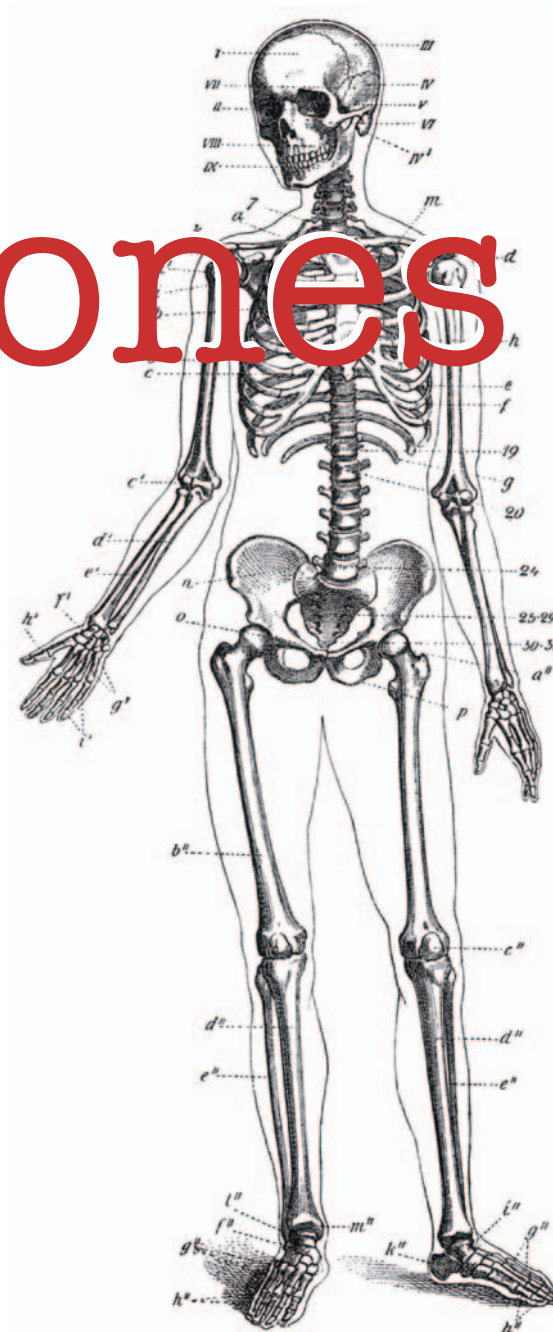
Dear Jane,

Spring is coming soon and I hope to have finished rehabilitation by that time and perhaps to walk normally again. I can't complain however since research has shown that hip fractures result in death in up to 20 percent of cases, and disability in 50 percent of those who survive. Twenty percent end up in a nursing home.

Osteoporosis is a "silent killer" because those at-risk cannot see or feel the thinning of their bones. I had no idea I had it until that day I slipped and broke my hip. Mother was stooped and I had broken my wrist when I was 50 but I felt well, I ate well and exercised. No one had told me I had risk factors and that I should have been tested to see if I needed treatment.

There is a care gap in the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis in Canada. In hip fracture patients over age 65, a diagnosis of osteoporosis was considered by only 23% of internists, 13% of geriatricians and 14% of orthopedic specialists (Juby AG, et al. Osteoporosis Int 2002; 13:205-10) I am writing to let you know that you are also at risk of osteoporosis and, that you should have a bone density measurement. Ask your physician. There are treatments available now. History should not repeat itself. Don't wait until you fracture as I did.

Your sister,
Elisabeth



Monique Camerlain MD FRCPC,
Consultant Member, Service de
Rhumatologie, Centre Hospitalier
Universitaire de Sherbrooke.

Philippe Markon, Ph.D. ALCOA
Past Chair and Professor
University of Quebec at
Chicoutimi

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Fight for **Your Bones...**

Definition:

Osteoporosis is a systemic disease of the skeleton characterized by compromised bone strength which leads to an increased risk of fractures. Bone strength results from the integration of bone quality and bone quantity. While quality refers to architecture, turnover, damage accumulation and mineralization; quantity refers to grams of mineral per area of volume. The bone fragility of osteoporosis results from both poor quality and low bone mass (1).

The World Health Organization has defined osteoporosis as a bone density of 2.5 standard deviations below the average for 20 to 40 year olds as measured by osteodensitometry.

Who is at risk for Osteoporosis?

One in four women over the age of 50 has osteoporosis. One in eight men over 50 also has the condition. It is important to increase awareness of the condition in men so that they will also take care of protecting their bones. Osteoporosis can strike young people but risk does increase with age, with post-menopausal white women being

at greatest risk. A woman may lose up to one-third of the bone mass in her spine within the first six years after menopause. Other risk factors include a history of a bone fracture, thin or small-framed build, a family history of osteoporosis, a diet low in calcium, use of certain medications and some illnesses, an inactive lifestyle, smoking, and heavy alcohol use (1).

It is recommended that both women and men over 65 years of age be screened for osteoporosis by a bone density measurement. This screening should be done after 50 years of age in individuals who have risk factors.

Bone Physiology:

As stated by Osteoporosis Canada: bone is a living tissue constantly renewed by the removal of old bone and its replacement by new bone. Osteoclasts are bone cells which create small cavities that are filled by bone-forming cells called osteoblasts. It is a way to keep our bones strong and healthy (2).

While we are young, the osteoclasts and osteoblasts work together to keep our bones in good health. After our mid-30s, we begin to gradually lose bone because the process becomes less

efficient. In osteoporosis, bone loss occurs more rapidly, causing the bones to become thinner and weaker over time. When the disease is diagnosed the person has already lost a significant amount of bone and will continue to do so unless proper treatment is given (2).

Can Osteoporosis be treated?

A combination of diet, physical activity and, when appropriate, prescription medications can prevent and even treat osteoporosis.

The following recommendations are from *"Taking Charge of Osteoporosis"* (1):

Calcium and vitamin D.

Calcium is important in keeping bones healthy. Vitamin D helps the absorption of calcium. People with osteoporosis should make sure they are getting enough calcium and vitamin D, particularly during the winter months. Lack of vitamin D is a problem made worse in the winter, when the sun's rays are not intense enough to help bodies make the vitamin.

You can find calcium in milk, low-fat plain yogurt, cheese, broccoli, canned salmon, calcium-fortified orange juice and calcium-fortified tofu. Ask your

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doctor how much calcium your body needs since it varies according to age and in certain conditions. If you find it hard to get enough calcium from your diet you may consider calcium supplements. The major food sources of vitamin D are vitamin D-fortified dairy products, egg yolks, saltwater fish and liver. Some calcium supplements and most multivitamins contain vitamin D. You should also make sure to have a nutritious diet with enough protein and limited salt.

No smoking because bone loss is increased by smoking.

Limit alcohol.

Bone formation and the absorption of calcium may be diminished by having more than two alcoholic drinks a day.

Limit caffeine.

Bone breakdown is increased by caffeine.

Prevent falls.

Have good lighting, remove trip hazards, install handrails, and make sure your bath and shower are not slippery.

Physical activity.

Bones become stronger and denser when you place demands on them. Strength training, such as weight-lifting, helps you build the muscles and bones in your arms and upper spine. Weight-bearing exercise, such as

walking, jogging, running, and stair climbing, helps the bones in your legs, hips and lower spine. Physical activity can also improve balance and reduce the risk of falls. Studies have shown that you need to be physically active to improve treatment results in your bones. While ageing, you may not increase your bone density by being physically active; you can delay the bone loss. If you have a safe neighbourhood, get a good pair of shoes and go for a 30 minute walk alone or with a friend.

Moreover, spending more energy gives you a chance to increase your food intake. This is also an opportunity to get a little more calcium from food. Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults, www.paguide.com offers helpful suggestions to increase your physical activity.

Drug treatments.

For individuals with osteoporosis, there is a variety of drug treatments available now. Consult the website of Osteoporosis Canada (www.osteoporosis.ca) for more information (2). Although the primary aim of drug treatments is to reduce fractures, medications may also be used to prevent osteoporosis by reducing bone loss in individuals who are at high risk.

Drug treatments include:

- Bisphosphonates
- Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulators (SERMs)
- Hormone Replacement Therapy
- Calcitonin and Testosterone Replacement Therapy
- Parathyroid Hormone
- Stontium renelate

Take medications as directed.

To reduce your risk of side effects and increase your chance of developing strong bones, your doctor may prescribe a drug as part of your treatment, carefully follow the directions for taking it. Your doctor may verify if your drug treatment is working by requiring a bone density test. You should keep on taking the medication as long as directed. The treatment of osteoporosis requires a long time commitment.

CONCLUSION:

The findings of a 1996-1997 population-based survey of 17,354 Canadian adults aged 60 and older indicate that a substantial proportion of older adults lead relatively inactive lives and often fall short of recommended standards for preventive health-care visits and screening tests. Moreover, nearly two thirds (63.2%) of older

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Fight for **Your Bones...**

adults reported no efforts in the prior year to make changes to improve their health, and similar numbers (66.7%) indicated they thought no changes were needed (3).

In a survey on active living and health of 327 Vancouver women over age 70, older women were reluctant to do anything active in unsupervised settings. Some even saw basic exercises as leading to a mortal event (4).

It is time for health care workers and for older adults to condemn what Pliny the Younger described as "that indolent but agreeable condition of doing nothing". Care gaps in preventable and treatable conditions of ageing such as osteoporosis should not be tolerated considering the personal, familial and societal costs.

References:

- 1 Taking Charge of Osteoporosis: A Guide for Patients" <http://www.agingresearch.org>
- 2 <http://www.osteoporosis.ca>
- 3 Newsom JT, Kaplan MS, Huguet N, McFarland BH. Health behaviours in a representative sample of older Canadians: prevalence, reported change, motivation to change, and perceived barriers. *Gerontologist* 2004 Apr; 44(2): 193-205.
- 4 O'Brien Cousins S. "My heart couldn't take it". Older women's beliefs about personal risks in physical exercise. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 55B(5): 283-294.2000.

This article was made possible through the contribution of a research-based pharmaceutical company, member of Rx&D.

Ontario Government Invests In Bone Health

Elizabeth Forsyth, one of the nearly 530,000 Ontarians living with osteoporosis, became increasingly concerned about the implications of a tumble, when diagnosed with the disease in 2000. Working with seniors everyday, Elizabeth knows the benefits of maintaining good bone health. Unfortunately, she recognizes that osteoporosis management is often not a priority for many seniors.

"People don't realize that stopping their osteoporosis medication when they have 'brittle bones' may lead to an increase in fractures and breaks, says Elizabeth. However, I see seniors everyday who feel fine and often stop taking their medication because they can't see or feel their bones thinning. Sadly, this is even more pronounced for those on a fixed income who often have to choose between buying food or paying for medications."

But now, there is good news for osteoporosis sufferers in Ontario.

FOSAVANCE®, which combines the world's leading osteoporosis treatment with vitamin D, an important component in treating the disease, is now fully covered by the province's drug benefit plan.

"Patients must sustain treatment to maintain healthy bone density. In my practice, however, the inability to continually pay for medication is one of the main reasons why people stop taking their drugs. In fact, this can be as high as 50 per cent after one year of treatment for patients without private coverage," explains Dr. Aliya Khan, Director of the Calcium Disorders Clinic at St. Joseph's Healthcare at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. "Now that the province of Ontario fully covers FOSAVANCE, we should see more patients staying on their medication which will lead to better bone health. This decision should be applauded."



In Canada and around the world, the population of older adults (65+) continues to grow at a robust rate.

Recognizing the fundamental need to address the challenges presented by the growing

number of older and frail individuals, the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA) has assumed a leadership role in this area.

Mobility, freedom and the ability to independently care for oneself are concepts often taken for granted. However as we age, it can be easy to find oneself in a situation where, as an independent and successful older adult, help is needed with what once were considered simply daily tasks.

Extensive research shows that physical activity enhances general well being, improves overall physical and psychological health, delays the onset of frailty and helps preserve independent living. Physical inactivity is an important risk factor for a number of chronic health conditions such as

Promoting An Active, Healthy Lifestyle for

Older Adults

cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, obesity, osteoporosis, diabetes mellitus, and arthritis. Approximately 80% of older adults report one or more chronic conditions, including twice as many respiratory, arthritis, rheumatism and hypertension problems, and at least three times as much heart disease as the total population. Regular exercise is paramount in delaying the onset, or reducing the incidence and severity of such chronic diseases and their resulting functional disability.

That is why it is the mission of CCAA to take what research shows and to develop and disseminate exercise programs to ensure that older adults are offered the opportunity to gain skills to age with grace.

In conjunction with The University of Western Ontario, the CCAA operates research

laboratories that specialize in cardiorespiratory function, muscle metabolism, neuromuscular

physiology, heart function and strength testing. The Faculty of Health Sciences provides state-of-the-art on-campus research laboratories and professors to advance our health and aging research mission.

To render the research that CCAA does relevant, an extensive Community Outreach Division has been formed and develops model community exercise programs and trains fitness leaders across the country to deliver their proven programs.

People over the age of 65 comprise one of the fastest growing segments of the population and also represent the most sedentary portion of the adult population. The Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging's innovative programs

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have the potential to promote an active, healthy lifestyle for older adults that will enhance their quality of life and keep them fully engaged in society.

For more information about the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging, including descriptions and schedules of their exercise programs, physical activity leadership workshops as well as their current research, please visit their websites: **www.uwo.ca/actage** **www.ccaa-outreach.com** or call 519 661-1603, Clara Fitzgerald, Program Director CCAA.

Whitby Seniors Services
Intergenerational Project

The Town of Whitby Seniors Services in collaboration with Henry Street High School wrote and produced a live play through a grant from the New Horizons for Seniors Program. The project began in February with a play writing contest with the goal of debunking stereotypical ideation of seniors and youth. Both youth and seniors were involved in every step of the way from beginning to end. The winning play about a senior defrauded by an alleged relative and youth coming to her rescue was written by three senior women from Whitby Seniors Services called "A Class Act". Seniors making up the cast and crew joined the Grade 11 class everyday to rehearse their lines and to work on building sets and props. The play was shown over two nights in May and it was a real hit. Both seniors and youth enjoyed their experiences and learned a great deal about each others' generation.

ALCOA Welcomes New Corresponding Member



Vintage Fitness has been recently approved by the Guardians (Board) of the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults as a Corresponding Member. Vintage Fitness offers personal training and fitness classes in Toronto for adults 50+. Their trainers are certified "Older Adult



Specialists" through the Canadian Fitness Professionals Organization with a goal of providing support to older adults in maintaining independence, health and vibrancy well into your senior years. Vintage Fitness is currently in the development stages of producing a home exercise DVD specific to older adults 50+ with a focus on strengthening as opposed to cardiovascular work and has asked ALCOA for input on the project. We will keep you apprised as to when the DVD is available as it will be an added resource to make available to the older adults you work with, as I am sure as do we, that you receive ongoing requests for exercise program information for older adults.

Positive Results

The Story of Philip Joseph



*“Philip told himself that by **thinking positively** he can do anything and used the power of Yoga practice to heal.”*

Philip Joseph is a long time member of Taylor Place Senior Adult Centre and a frequent volunteer. We sat down recently and I grilled Philip for his secret to living to 82 at the same time as writing a book, fighting cancer, recovering from a knee replacement, renovating a cottage, being a caregiver, working on a number of committees, teaching Yoga, not to mention the daily 5km walks. The secret is a positive attitude to life. Everything falls into place after that. Philip lives a life full of wellness and vigour as a result. Sure, anyone can do it, but that doesn't make it easy.

As Philip got older, the effects of aging became very apparent to him. When a heart attack put him on a rehabilitation program, Philip came back fighting. Not only did he launch himself into advocacy work for health issues around aging, but Philip ran a marathon. An aging body wasn't going to keep him down!

In 2005, Philip was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He told himself the healing power of the will, mind, body and spirit would alleviate the side effects of treatment. And it does. A recent knee replacement limited his flexibility. Philip told himself that by thinking positively he can do anything and used the power of Yoga practice to heal. His physiotherapist told him he'd never bend his knee as much as he does today. He rejects that negative thinking. It's been more than 8 years since Philip Joseph began instructing Yoga at Taylor Place Senior Adult Centre. We are privileged to have this source of positive inspiration here and in our community. Philip shows us anyone can take the bite out of the aches and pains that come with aging. After all, nothing's impossible!

Article submitted by: Katherine McLeod, Executive Assistant, Don Mills Foundation for Seniors

photo courtesy of S. Lake Photo

Physical Activity

The New Prescription for Aging Boomer Population



Vintage Fitness, a Toronto based fitness service for adults 50 plus has an extensive list of programs suited specifically to seniors wanting to address and prevent health concerns. Founder and Director, Erin Billowits, a seasoned athlete and certified personal trainer with specialized accreditation in "older adult fitness", says her company philosophy and approach understands that the needs of older adults encompasses more than just exercise.

Billowits states that "aging adults need the reassurance of one-on-one attention from a certified personal trainer, many fear they will injure themselves if they initiate an exercise regimen on their own. They also seek an opportunity to interact with others. We offer both the physical and social elements they need within a framework catering exclusively to their age group."

Billowits, a certified fitness instructor for more than a decade, has a specialized accreditation in "older adult fitness". The credential separates her from other

trainers with specific knowledge of medical conditions more likely to affect seniors such as osteoporosis, heart disease and arthritis. Her training makes her more attentive to the symptoms of such diseases and able to modify exercises appropriately.

Billowits has trained clients ranging from aged 65 to 79, all with varying ailments or reasons to start exercising. After replacing both knees and suffering a heart attack, the doctor of a 79 year old client commented on how significantly her heart had strengthened since implementing a fitness program. A 66 year old woman who started exercise following the death of her husband was feeling isolated and worried that she wouldn't have enough energy to play with her grandchildren. Exercising has created a new network of friends and the endurance of a super granny.

For additional information regarding Vintage Fitness, check out their website at www.vintagefitness.ca



There Is Nothing Stopping You From Enjoying A Wilderness Hike



sense of community by joining together people with disabilities and their able-bodied counterparts in mutually rewarding recreational activity. For those who have suffered a disabling injury or illness, the vehicle means being able to once again hike with friends and family.

ALACD is dedicated to increasing the independence and well being of older adults living in our community. Our desire is to foster opportunities for active living to all Manitobans! ALACD has partnered with the City of Winnipeg to make the TrailRiders available to the public, on a free loans program, through the City of Winnipeg Leisure Guide. Contact Judy at the ALACD Manitoba office for more information (204) 478-6169.

The Active Living Alliance for Canadians with Disability in Manitoba (ALACD-Manitoba), in partnership with The South Winnipeg Seniors Resource Council (SWSRC), has developed an exciting new Adaptive Equipment Loans program for the province of Manitoba. Through the dedicated efforts of Manitoba MP, Steven Fletcher, and the generous grant funding from the Winnipeg Foundation, Manitoba in motion and another granting foundation who wishes to remain anonymous, we now have access to 2 TrailRiders right in our home province of Manitoba.

The TrailRider is a revolutionary mobility device that provides unparalleled wilderness access possibilities for persons with a disability. Futuristic-looking, lightweight, highly maneuverable, the TrailRider carries its occupant across rugged terrain, over sand, snow, rocks, and through shallow streams with the help of two able-bodied individuals (affectionately known as "sherpas"), one who pulls and one who pushes.

The TrailRider's benefits are much greater than simply providing physical access to the wilderness; the TrailRider helps increase a



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Innovative Programming for the 50+ Generation

Seniors' Day has allowed this community to explore new directions in active aging. It is an ongoing task for those programming for seniors to re-

The overwhelming success of Seniors' Day is evident in the fact that the program has been filled to capacity every year. By offering Seniors' Day, Centres for Seniors Windsor helps the older adults of this community to attain a positive attitude while enjoying a healthy, active and fun day!

Seniors' Day is an event held at Centres for Seniors Windsor each June during Seniors' Month. It is an all-day symposium that includes a choice of four of nearly 30 seminar topics as diverse as: digital photography, genealogy, golfing, travel, fitness and backyard birding, to name a few, plus a keynote address featuring prominent local celebrities who exemplify the image of a modern, active senior.

This program represents a new era in seniors programming that focuses on a positive, educational theme rather than one focused on the negative aspects of aging, and thus, all the workshops encompass being active in body, mind and spirit.

evaluate and when necessary, reinvent this industry. Events such as this one offer programmers the chance to experiment and recreate programs based on participant feedback. Registration and evaluations have given the Centres' programmers a clear picture of the types of opportunities that older adults seek, and have allowed us to expand our regular programming based on this. Furthermore, this event has assisted in changing the image of seniors in the community as well as how seniors view themselves. Older adults are realizing that it's great to be a senior and that the retirement years don't mean sitting around in a rocking chair.

