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# Healthy lifestyle for healthy bones

**W**E ARE the last person to accept the fact that speeding up the two wheeler without the helmet or dodging the car in office hours without the seatbelt could land us to an emergency bed any moment. Added with this would be severe devastating conditions like head/spinal injury, multiple fractures, blunt trauma injury etc to lighter conditions like cuts and bruises.

Being a hard core trauma surgeon as my first choice of interest, most of the time I spent was operating on fractures and trauma cases couple of years back. I am indeed proud to state that for the last two years road traffic accidents are reducing in number owing to the widespread awareness through the "Safe Drive Save Life" campaign.

We spend most of our time in offices that are just enclosed places with artificial light and are temperature controlled, having no exposure to sunlight. And in these Sun-forsaken cubicles, we are taking in inordinate burden of stress. Then, to make up for a day spent in an immobile state, we are hitting the gym late in the evening, often to follow an exercise regimen that is neither suited to us physically, nor is it within the scope of our ability. The testos-

terone rush, perceived or otherwise, gives us a high which pushes us party-ward, where we pile our body with junk food and fill our lungs with smoke before we wash it all down with alcoholic beverages. Needless to say, the effect is catastrophic with an increased incidence of a plethora of health problems like overweight, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis etc.

Cases of Vitamin D deficiency, which is brought about by the lack of exposure to sunlight are going up unabated. Please note, Vitamin D deficiency leads to body ache, mental irritation, drowsiness and as many studies have established, may even lead to malignancy, which makes it a serious matter, as is obvious.

Orthopaedic problems – both of the medical and the surgical types are on the rise in a manner that is frightening. As a matter of fact, it will not be out of place to mention here that the lack of exercise is as bad and harmful as the wrong exercises that we are forcing our bodies into, which is one of the major reasons behind the abnormal spurts in orthopaedic cases. To this list adds the lifestyle related diseases which sets higher challenges to address treatment plans.

Women today, mostly working, have to juggle between office deadlines, manage household chores and give their best to keep their children

up to the mark not only academically but also in co-curricular activities. Adding to her stress level is, managing all this single-handedly with the growing number of nuclear families. Having almost no time to look after herself, her rising stress levels are adding on to her health problems. One such manifestation is onset of early menopause leading to hormonal imbalances. Naturally, when the body's natural hormone levels go for a toss, there is direct fallout on the bones and the musculoskeletal system, which in turn lead to orthopaedic problems like osteoporosis etc. One of the prime reasons of steep rise in knee replacement surgeries, neck femur fractures in women are due to osteoporosis.

Luckily, a number of treatment procedures are now widely available which have been proved to be very effective in dealing with the matter, provided one consults an orthopaedician once the early signs manifest themselves.

On a more basic level, the "to-do" list should be considered as the first line of defense against orthopaedic problems. Exercise regularly. Walking is the most basic and safe exercise one can do. Do not start with brisk walking on day one itself. Do not smoke. Do not abuse alcohol. Avoid junk food. Eat a lot of vegetables and take balanced diets. Don't stay glued to the chair and take short breaks to stretch often. Ensure that there is a certain distance between your eyes and the monitor on which you work the whole day, sit yourself in a comfortable chair that is friendly (with back support) to your back. Ensure that you have a proper posture when you sit, or even walk, so that you may not inadvertently cause harm to your bones.

Go out in the sun and take short walks whenever possible, not only to bask in the rays of the sun, but also exercise the muscles, apart from freshening up the mind.

### Use stairs instead of lifts.

If you come across pain or discomfort with your bones/ joints particularly make sure you see your orthopaedician early so that he has ample options to give you back a comfortable life. The more the delay the more you are away from simpler solutions. And, of course, the best solution still remains "prevention." ■