



Osteoporosis Canada

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# COPING

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**Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!**

## Living with the Silent Thief By Olof Wood

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### Fracture Fact

Osteoporosis has been called “the silent thief” because bone loss occurs without symptoms until there’s a fracture, particularly of the hip, spine, shoulder or wrist.

Olof Wood is a long-time member of Osteoporosis Canada, Manitoba Chapter. Her personal story has been shared at various Manitoba Chapter events. Olof has kindly consented to share her story with the COPN membership, and she does so with amazingly good humour!



I live with the silent thief - osteoporosis. It slowly robbed my bones of strength until they were porous, brittle and fragile, and thus more at risk of breaking. Just as importantly, osteoporosis has robbed me of my sense of well-being.

I had my first fracture when I was 14 years old. I was skating on the creek that ran by my grandparents' home when I tripped over a patch of rough ice, fell, and broke my left wrist. A few years later, again while skating, someone ran into me and I broke my collarbone. *I haven't skated since!*

At the end of July, 1984, we were playing ball at our trailer and as I slowly ran across the open field, I stumbled. I fell hard and we all heard the snap as my ankle and right wrist both broke. Now I was off on a most uncomfortable ride to the Gimli hospital. The ankle fracture was so severe I would need an orthopedic specialist, so I was immediately put into an ambulance and sent to the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg. During surgery they discovered that I had a severe case of osteoporosis. I spent 13 long days in the hospital. I eventually mastered the crutches - *it wasn't nearly as much fun as you might think!* At the end of August we started therapy on my wrist; by October it was time for therapy on my ankle.

Physical therapy is hard work, often painful, but it has to be done. Giving up was never an option. After persistent questioning on my part, one of the doctors said I would probably have a limp. I had no intention of letting that happen, so I continued exercising my ankle until I could walk naturally. To this day, as I tire, a slight limp does become noticeable.

A bone mineral density test the following year showed that I had osteoporosis and my bones were shockingly thin. I was told to be careful, and it was suggested I start to use a cane. I was in my early 50s... *only old people need to use a cane.*

In 1987 I broke my right wrist again. The wrist bones didn't knit properly and even after extensive therapy, I have limited movement and very little strength in my wrist. In 1994 I broke my left wrist for the second time. *For those of you keeping score, that's both wrists—twice.*

Breaking a bone is painful and I live with the constant risk and fear of more fractures. As you recover, there is a feeling of frustration that comes from not being able to do the things you're used to doing. Now, years later, I still get a twinge in my ankle at unexpected times and I have a pinched nerve in my foot between two toes that were broken. *On the other hand, although naturally right-handed, I'm almost ambidextrous because I've had to use my left hand when my right one was in a cast.*

I have a constant fear of falling. I always use the handrails on stairs. I don't wear high heels any more. I usually keep my eyes glued to the ground so that I won't slip on a patch of ice or stumble over something. I miss a lot of scenery, and *I'm sure I have friends who think I'm purposely avoiding them.* I try not to twist and turn. I try not to bend over to pick something up or lift heavy objects, but some things you do automatically, like picking up a grandchild. For almost 30 years I've taken a calcium supplement with vitamin D and osteoporosis medication, and I've exercised! Subsequent bone density tests show that my bones haven't deteriorated very much in that time, although I'm almost three decades older.

Now it's 2016 and research into new treatments continues. With public support and increased awareness, those of us with osteoporosis can look forward to an improved quality of life.

More and more I realize that osteoporosis is a life changing condition and it is extremely important that young people be made aware of the importance of building good strong bones. Hopefully, it should only be a matter of time until we can arrest the silent thief!

If you have questions about this article or any other aspect of osteoporosis, please call [toll-free 1-800-463-6842](tel:1-800-463-6842) (416-696-2663 in the Greater Toronto Area) to speak to an information counsellor.

## FUNNY BONE:

If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, it's just possible that you haven't grasped the situation. — Jean Kerr

# A Recipe from our Sponsor

## Cheddar latke sandwiches

Course: *Main Dishes*

Preparation Time: *20 mins*

Cooking Time: *20-25 mins*

Yields: *6 servings*

*3/4 milk product serving(s) per person*

**Calcium:** 28% DV/ 305 mg



What's better than homemade latkes? Homemade latkes with apricot and Aged Cheddar.

For more information about this recipe:

<http://www.dairygoodness.ca/getenough/recipes/cheddar-latke-sandwiches>

## Ingredients

1/2 cup (125 mL) dried apricots  
1 tsp (5 mL) fresh horseradish, chopped  
4 medium potatoes  
1/2 onion, thinly sliced  
2 eggs  
2 tbsp (30 mL) flour  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 tbsp (30 mL) **butter**

8 oz (225 g) **Canadian Aged Cheddar**, cut into 6 slices  
1 cup (250 mL) arugula

## Tips

**Cheese alternative:** Canadian Gouda.

## Preparation

Place apricots and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175 mL) water in a small saucepan. Cover, bring to a boil on medium heat and cook for 5 minutes. Add horseradish and purée using a hand blender; set aside.

Peel and grate potatoes; place in a bowl of cold water. Drain, rinse with cold water and drain again. Place potatoes in a clean dishtowel and wring out excess liquid.

Using your hands, mix potatoes, onion, eggs and flour in a bowl. Generously season with salt and pepper.

Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

In a large skillet, melt butter on medium-high heat and drop spoonfuls of potato mixture, flattening with a spatula, to make a dozen latkes. Cook for 5 minutes on each side or until latkes are tender and golden. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towel.

Place latkes on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Top 6 with cheese slices and cook in the oven until cheese is melted. Add apricot purée and arugula; cover with remaining 6 latkes. Serve immediately.

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[getenough.ca](http://getenough.ca)

