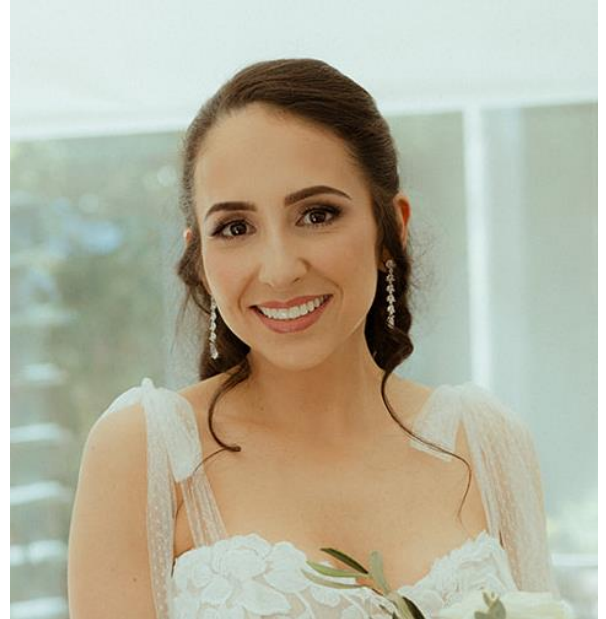


## Kristy, 33

Assistant brand manager, health coach, and women's health advocate diagnosed with osteopenia in her late 20's, **SYDNEY**

Assistant brand manager, health coach for hypothalamic amenorrhea (HA) – a condition in which the hypothalamus causes the period to stop) – and women's health advocate, Kristy, 33, Sydney, was diagnosed with osteopenia (reduced bone density) in January, 2018 after seeking medical attention for fertility issues.



Heavily involved in different sports from a young age, Kristy was a competitive weightlifter and CrossFit enthusiast throughout most of her teens and early adulthood.

At 15 years of age, Kristy noticed her periods had stopped, which she later learned was due to a condition called hypothalamic amenorrhea (HA). The diagnosis of HA had a profound effect on her physically and emotionally. She wrestled with HA for more than 10 years.

In her early 20s, Kristy was placed on hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to help regulate her period. Due to the ongoing cost of this medication, however, Kristy chose to stop taking it, and subsequently relapsed.

When Kristy started planning to have a baby in 2018, she visited a fertility specialist who, based on her medical history and HRT medication use, referred Kristy for a bone mineral density (BMD) scan. Kristy was consequently diagnosed with osteopenia in 2018.

Today, Kristy is sharing her story to increase community awareness, and understanding of osteopenia, and its long-term effects, especially for younger people who may be at risk.

### **This is Kristy's story.**

Kristy was diagnosed with osteopenia at 28 years of age. The diagnosis came as a complete shock to her, given she had no known family history of bone disease.

"I remember being handed my bone density results in hospital. I had no idea what they meant, let alone my prognosis.

"When the doctor explained I had osteopenia, my world fell apart," said Kristy.

"I felt afraid, frustrated, and devastated.

"I didn't realise someone my age could develop a bone disease. I thought it was something that affected older people," Kristy said.

Living with osteopenia has compromised Kristy's quality of life.

“My diagnosis of osteopenia has been physically and mentally challenging.

“Physically, I need to be constantly vigilant with my bone health,” said Kristy.

“Mentally, the fear of developing osteoporosis, and fractures, weighs heavily on my mind.”

Nowadays, Kristy prioritises her bone health.

“I try to ensure I am adequately hydrated, get sufficient sleep, and I follow a well-rounded fitness regimen, including weight bearing exercises.

“I have a diet high in calcium and vitamin D,” Kristy said.

“I am vigilant about maintaining my bone density, and preventing further deterioration.

“I have bi-annual bone density scans and medical check-ups to track my progress,” said Kristy.

Today, Kristy is passionate about sharing her story, professionally. She has worked in the health and wellness space for more than 15 years, and uses her knowledge and academic studies to help other people daily.

“I am committed to increasing community awareness of bone health, to help others recognise any potential warning signs of osteopenia or osteoporosis, and to encourage people to proactively look after their bones.

“I hope that by sharing my story, it serves to highlight the importance of early detection, diagnosis, and proactive management of bone disease,” Kristy said.

“I am grateful to my amazing doctor who has helped me post-diagnosis. I maintain a proactive attitude and outlook towards managing my osteopenia.”

Kristy has a simple, but poignant message about the importance of maintaining healthy bones.

“Don't neglect your bones.

“We all have regular dentist check-ups, so we should be doing the same for our bones,” said Kristy.

“Every Australian should consider their bone health, and learn how to best protect their bones.

“Healthy Bones Australia has many helpful resources and translated materials to help you assess your risk of developing osteopenia and osteoporosis,” Kristy said.

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