

Muscle Strengthening Activities

What are muscle strengthening activities?

Muscle strengthening activities are physical activities, including exercise, that increase muscle strength and endurance.

Examples include:

- Lifting weights
- Working with resistance bands
- Doing exercises that use your body weight for resistance (i.e. squats and step-ups)
- Climbing stairs
- Heavy gardening (i.e. digging, shoveling)

Why should I do muscle strengthening activities?

The **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines** recommend that you perform muscle and bone strengthening activities using the major muscle groups at least **2 days per week**.





By including strengthening exercise as part of your regular physical activity, you can:

- Help prevent age-related loss of muscle bulk
- Help maintain or increase bone health
- Reduce the symptoms of many chronic diseases (i.e. fatigue)
- Improve your balance, coordination, and mobility
- Reduce your risk of falling




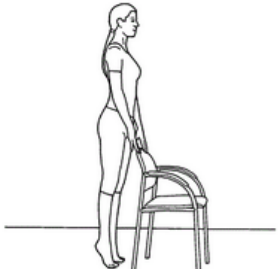
What muscle strengthening exercises should I do?

There are many ways you can strengthen your muscles, whether it's at home or at the gym. Here are some general strengthening exercises for you to try that target each of the major muscle groups.



TIPs – Tailored Intervention Protocols

	<p>Stand facing a wall. Place your hands on the wall. Your elbows should be straight and your hands should be at shoulder height.</p> <p>Slowly do push-ups against the wall, keeping your body in a straight line.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p> <p>Progression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move your feet further from the wall • Do this exercise leaning on a table (see below)
	<p>Stand and lean forward onto a table. Your elbows should be straight and your arms should be at a right angle to your body.</p> <p>Slowly do a push-up, keeping your body in a straight line.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p>
	<p>Stand with your back against a wall and your arms by your side.</p> <p>Push your arms back against the wall and tighten your shoulder blade muscles. Be sure to keep your shoulders against the wall.</p> <p>Hold 5 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p>
 <p>©PhysioTools Ltd</p>	<p>Sit on a chair with your back straight. Clasp the arms of the chair and lift your bottom from the seat by straightening your elbows and pushing your shoulders down and away from your ears. Keep your chin tucked in. You can push with your legs if needed.</p> <p>Slowly lower your bottom until it just touches the seat, then lift your bottom again.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p> <p>Progression:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straighten your legs in front of you and don't use them

TIPs – Tailored Intervention Protocols

 <p>©PhvsioTools Ltd</p>	<p>Sit toward the front of a chair with your hands across your chest. Bend forward at the waist so that you nose is over your toes. Stand up and sit down again slowly, making sure that your nose stays over your toes.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p> <p>Progression: Do not sit between repetitions. Slowly lower your bottom until it just touches the chair, then stand again.</p> <p>Note: For safety, place the chair against a wall.</p>
 <p>©PhvsioTools Ltd</p>	<p>Stand straight holding on to a chair for support. Slowly lift your leg sideways and bring it back, keeping your toes pointing forward and your trunk straight throughout the exercise.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times on each leg.</p> <p>To progress this exercise, add ankle weights or Theraband.</p> <p>Note: This exercise can also be done in side-lying (see below)</p>
 <p>©PhvsioTools Ltd</p>	<p>Lie on your side supporting yourself on your elbow. Roll your top hip slightly forward, using your top arm to support yourself in front.</p> <p>Keeping your top leg straight, lift it up toward the ceiling. Make sure that the leg stays in line with your body and your toes point forward. Hold this position for 3 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times with each leg.</p> <p>To progress this exercise, add ankle weights or Theraband.</p>
	<p>Stand with light support from a chair, if needed.</p> <p>Rise up on your toes, hold 3 seconds, then lower your heels to the ground.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p>

TIPs – Tailored Intervention Protocols

	<p>Place your foot on the bottom step of the stairs, using the railing for support only as much as needed. Keeping this foot on the step, slowly step up and then down again, making sure each step-up is controlled.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times. Then repeat the exercise with the other foot on the step.</p> <p>Progression: Increase the height of the step to a maximum of 18”.</p>
	<p>Lie on your back with your knees bent. Place your hands (or a small rolled towel) in the small of your low back. This is to prevent your back from flattening on the floor. Straighten 1 leg. Curl up just enough to unweight your head and shoulders. Feel your stomach muscles stiffen.</p> <p>Hold 10 seconds, breathing deeply throughout the exercise. Relax.</p> <p>Repeat 10 times.</p>

Some precautions when doing strengthening activities:

- If you cannot do the suggested number of repetitions of an exercise, start with fewer repetitions and progress gradually.
- Increase the amount of effort SLOWLY so your muscles have a chance to adapt.
- Once you can complete 10 repetitions of each exercise, try to progress until you are able to complete **3 sets of 10 repetitions** of each exercise. Do this gradually to avoid injury.
- Take a day off between strengthening sessions to give your muscles a chance to recover.
- To avoid injury, perform each exercise at a comfortable speed.
- Breathe naturally. Do not hold your breath. Count your repetitions out loud to make sure you are breathing properly.
- If you have pain that lasts for longer than 2 hours after exercising, do less next time. If an exercise continues to give you trouble, contact a health professional.