# IMPORTANT

**Safety tips before start with Fitness Program**

***\*Consult a physician before you begin an exercise program.***

Using free weights is effective way of improving strength and fitness. Lifting weights improves fitness while it burns calories, increase muscle size, strength, power, and endurance, and increases bone density. It also increases bone density and improves quality of life for many older adults. Instruction is necessary if you have never used free weights before, or are notthat familiar with the use of free weights. Technique, and safety are important considerations.

Unlike weight machines, free weights don’t restrict movement. This is great for building strength, but it also increases the risk of injury. Safety precautions include having a good grip, maintain a stable position sitting or standing, use good technique or form, and getting good instruction from an exercise professional. Most accidents occur by falling weights that are not secure or fall out of a person’s hand, so pay particular attention to picking up and replacing free weights.

**Using Free Weights**  
Free weights can develop muscle-fitness depending on how you use them.

* Muscle Strength: 5-8 reps, 1-3 sets.
* Muscle Endurance: 15-20 reps, 1-3 sets.
* Muscle Power: 3-5 reps, 1-3 sets.

Rep is short for repetition. This means how many times you lift the weight. Set means a group of repetitions. Rest approximately one to two minutes between sets of each exercise, or long enough to catch your breath.

**Muscle Groups to Train**  
Exercising the major muscle groups is important for developing fitness.

* **Upper body:** front and back of arms, shoulders, chest, and upper back.
* **Torso:** abdominals, sides of torso (obliques), and lower back.
* **Legs:** front and back of thighs, calfs, and buttocks.

**Exercises to Do**

* **Upper body:** Bicep curls, tricep extension, shoulder press, bench press, and bent-over row.
* **Torso:** Abdominal curls (hands across chest), “Bird-Dog” (on hands and knees, lift opposite arm and leg 5 – 10 reps, then opposite arm/leg), and side-plank.
* **Legs:** Squats or Lunges, and heel raises.

**Technique is important!**

* Learn the proper technique for each exercise before proceeding.
* Exercise both sides of the body. Whatever you exercise on the front of the body, proceed with the corresponding exercise for the back of the body.
* Breathe! Exhale when the exercise is the hardest, and inhale when the exercise is the easiest.
* Move your joints through a full range of motion when performing each exercise.
* Move in a controlled manner. Do not let momentum move the weight.
* Drink water a regular intervals during your workout to keep your body hydrated.

**Posture**

* Maintain a straight spine when performing all exercises.
* Do not hyper-extend your spine.
* When picking weights up from the floor (or putting them down), use your legs, not your back.

**Using a spotter**  
When lifting very heavy weights, you should use a spotter in case the weights become too much for you to handle. A spotter can offer feedback about your technique, and give you a margin of safety to avoid injury.