

Training For Power and Strength

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Table of Contents

3 Biggest Benefits of Strength Training	4
Strength Training 101	6
Strength Training After Fifty	8
Strength Training FAQ's.....	10
Strength Training Guidelines.....	16
Strength Training: 10 Things You Must Know	19
Success with Strength Training	22
Top 10 Benefits of Strength Training for Women	23
Top Ten Reasons To Add Strength Training To Your Daily Routine	25
Train for Muscular Strength, Not for Muscular Size	27

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3 Biggest Benefits of Strength Training

Strength training is exercise that uses resistance to strengthen and condition the musculoskeletal system, improving muscle tone and endurance. "Strength training" is used as a general term synonymous with other common terms: "weightlifting" and "resistance training." Physiologically, the benefits of consistent strength training include an increase in muscle size and tone, increased muscular strength, and increases in tendon, bone, and ligament strength. Lifting weights has also been shown to improve psychological health as well, by increasing self-esteem, confidence and self-worth.

Improved Physical Appearance and Performance

One important result of strength training is increased physical performance. Muscles quite literally utilize energy to produce movement, functioning as the engine or powerhouse of the body. Strength training increases the muscles' size, strength, and endurance, which contribute to improvements in our work, favorite sports hobbies, and our general day-to-day activities.

Another benefit of a good strength-training program is its effect on our overall appearance and body composition. Which can directly influence self-esteem, self-worth, and level of confidence. Take, for example, a 170-pound man who has 20 percent body fat; 34 pounds of fat weight and 136 pounds of lean body weight (muscle, bones, organs, water, etc). By beginning an effective strength training program, he replaces five pounds of fat with five pounds of muscle. He still weighs 170 pounds, but he is now 17 percent fat with 29 pounds of fat weight and 141 pounds of lean body weight. Although his body weight remains the same, his strength, muscle tone, and metabolism have improved, giving him a fit appearance.

Both our physical appearance and our physical performance can be improved by muscle gain or hampered by muscle loss. Research indicates that unless we strength train regularly; we lose about one-half pound of muscle every year of our lives after age 30. Unless we implement a safe and effective weight lifting program, our muscles gradually decrease in size and strength in the process called "atrophy."

Lifting weights is therefore important for preventing the muscle loss that normally accompanies the aging process. A common misconception is that as we reach the age of senior citizens, it is normal to stop being active and to start using ambulatory aides like canes and wheelchairs. Many people think we have no choice; they think this is normal.

But this couldn't be further from the truth. There is absolutely no reason why all of us can't be physically, mentally, socially, and sexually active, living a healthy vibrant life until our last day on Earth! The reason many elderly people rely on ambulatory aides and become slower and fatter is simply that over the years their muscles have been wasting away, so their physical performance and metabolism also decrease, becoming less efficient.

Increased Metabolic Efficiency (your ability to burn excess calories)

That one-half pound of muscle loss every year after age 30 produces a one-half percent reduction in

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basal metabolic rate (BMR) every year. A reduction in BMR means that our bodies are less able to use the food we consume as energy, thus more gets stored as body fat. "Basal metabolic rate" refers to the energy used by our body at rest to maintain normal body functions.

Our muscles have high-energy requirements. Even when we are sleeping, our muscles use more than 25% of our energy (calories). When you implement the principles of effective strength training and you are consistent in your program, you will achieve an increase in lean muscle mass throughout your body and increase your BMR. In other words, you can actually condition your metabolism to work better and more efficiently even when you are at rest.

An increase in muscle tissue causes an increase in metabolic rate, and a decrease in muscle tissue causes a decrease in metabolic rate. You can see that anyone interested in decreasing body fat percentage and their risk of disease as well as in increasing physical performance and appearance, should be strength training to help condition their metabolism (BMR).

One of the biggest mistakes people make when starting a weight-management program is not including a strength training routine with their cardiovascular exercise and low-fat eating regimen. This is unfortunate because when we cut calories without exercise, we can lose muscle as well as fat.

Decreased Risk of Sustaining an Injury

Our muscles also function as shock absorbers and serve as important balancing agents throughout our body. Well-conditioned muscles help to lessen the repetitive landing forces in weight-bearing activities such as jogging or playing basketball. Well-balanced muscles reduce the risk of injuries that result when a muscle is weaker than its opposing muscle group.

To reduce the risk of unbalanced muscle development, you should make sure that when you are training a specific muscle group, the opposing muscle groups are being trained as well (though not necessarily on the same day). For example, if you are doing bench-pressing exercises for your chest, you should include some rowing exercises for your back muscles as well.

By now you have probably realized that weightlifting should be an important part of your exercise routine. Weightlifting provides many important benefits that cannot be achieved by any other exercise or activity. When you begin achieving great results, the excitement and fun you experience will make the change well worth the effort. Good luck; I hope you enjoy all the wonderful benefits of an effective strength training program. Copyright © 2005 Jeffrey Bedeaux Author resource: I have been weightlifting since the age of 15 and been training individuals for 12 years. Over the past 16 years I have read 100's of magazines, almost 100 books, attended about a dozen seminars and consumed any other type of information on the topic of bodybuilding to advance my knowledge in this area. I also have a Bachelors of Science degree in Biochemistry with minors in Chemistry and Microbiology from Colorado State University, 1998.

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Strength Training 101

Much has been written about the benefits of cardiovascular training. Until recently, however, little attention has been given to strength training, an important component of a balanced fitness program. You do not need to be a body builder to benefit from strength training. A well designed strength-training program can provide the following benefits:

Increased strength of bones, muscles and connective tissue (the tendons and ligaments), decreasing the risk of injury.

Increased muscle mass. Most adults lose about one-half pound of muscle per year after the age of 20. This is largely due to decreased activity. Muscle tissue is partly responsible for the number of calories burned at rest (the basal metabolic rate or BMR). As muscle mass increases, BMR increases, making it easier to maintain a healthy body weight.

Enhanced quality of life. As general strength increases, the effort required to perform daily routines (carrying groceries, working in the garden) will be less taxing.

THE CORE CURRICULUM

The box below includes exercises to work all the major muscle groups. Neglecting certain groups can lead to strength imbalances and postural difficulties. You may wish to consult with a certified fitness professional, such as www.gavinwalsh.co.uk to learn safe technique before beginning a strength training program. One set of 8-12 repetitions, working the muscle to the point of fatigue, is usually sufficient. Breathe normally lower the resistance with a slow, controlled cadence throughout the full range of motion.

Lifting the weight to a count of two and lowering it to a count of three or four is effective. When you are able to perform 12 repetitions of an exercise correctly (without cheating), increase the amount of resistance by 5 percent to 10 percent to continue safe progress.

Exercise	Muscle Group
Leg Press	quadriceps, gluteals
Leg Curl	hamstrings
Chest Press	pectorals
Lat Pull Down	latissimus dorsi
Lateral Raise	deltoid
Triceps Press	triceps
Biceps Curl	biceps
Curl-up	abdominals
Back Extension	erector spinae

STAYING MOTIVATED

An encouraging aspect of strength training is the fact that you'll likely experience rapid improvements in strength and muscle tone right from the start of your program. Don't be discouraged, however, if visible improvements begin to taper off after a few weeks.

It's only natural that, as your fitness level improves, improvements in strength and appearance will follow at a slightly slower pace. To help keep your motivation up, find a partner to train with you or hire a personal trainer (www.G-Fitness.com). Aim to exercise each muscle group at least two times per week, with a minimum of two days of rest between workouts. Training more frequently or adding more sets may lead to slightly greater gains, but the small added benefit may not be worth the extra time and effort (not to mention the added risk of injury).

VARY YOUR PROGRAM

Machines and free weights are effective tools for strength training, and a combination of the two is generally recommended. Utilizing both machines and free weights provides exercise variety, which is important for both psychological and physiological reasons. Variety not only reduces boredom, but also provides subtle exercise differences that will enhance progress. The benefits of strength training are no longer in question. Research continues to demonstrate that strength training increases both muscle and bone strength and reduces the risk of osteoporosis. A safe

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strength-training program combined with cardiovascular and flexibility training will give you the benefits of a total fitness program.

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Strength Training After Fifty

Strength training after fifty is no longer for those people who are having some sort of mid-life crisis. In fact, doctors are literally writing prescriptions to get this generation up and moving. They are taking out the pen and prescription pad, writing something barely legible, ripping it off the pad and handing it to more and more of their patients. So what's the result? Well the result is lots of people strength training after fifty years of age. It's magical. A doctor writes a prescription to strength train! No pharmacy necessary.

Unfortunately, strength training still conjures up images of young guys with bulging peck muscles and barely there tank tops. More and more fitness centers across the United States are seeing more and more fifty+ members. And that's a great movement.

So where should you begin if you happen to be one of the many strength training after fifty people? Let's start with the basics- measurements. And I'm not talking about weight only here. I am talking about body fat percentage and resting heart rate. These two elements are critical when determining a starting point for your strength training program.

Armed with that data, we proceed to talk about goals. What do you hope to accomplish? A drop in blood pressure? A decrease in clothing size? An increase in health? Whatever your goals may be, your trainer should be properly prepared to walk with you along your journey. Remember that safety is always a top concern. Go with a trainer that you feel comfortable with.

A typical beginning routine for those strength training after fifty may look a bit like this- Warm-up for 5-10 minutes Begin with isolated (one-joint) strength training exercises such a bicep curl or chest fly

After completing 3 sets of 12 reps for each major muscle group, move onto cardio Cardio can be anything that gets your heart pumping to approximately 60-70% of your maximum heart rate

Depending on your goals and health, the weight you lift and the amount of cardio performed will vary. Train well.

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About The Author

Lynn VanDyke is owner of <http://www.strength-training-woman.com>. She is certified in personal training, nutrition and yoga. Be sure to check out the No Limits ezine. It's a must-read for all things strength training.

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Strength Training FAQ's

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Do you need some beginner's strength training 'how to' information? I know you must have tons of questions. I will try my best to cover most of the beginner questions with this article. Just remember, above all else have fun and train safe!

How many reps and sets should I do?

How many reps and sets you do is completely dependent upon your goals and strength training method of choice. For example- if your goal is to lose weight and tone up your muscles, then you should consider doing 3 sets of 12 reps. If your goal is to increase muscle size, you will want to continually increase your weight size and consider a pyramid method for reps and sets.

How fast should I lift weights?

When you first learn about strength training, learn about proper speed. I see a lot of people lifting weights way to fast. A good speed is somewhere between 2-4 seconds on the lift and 3-4 seconds on the lowering phase. Your muscles aren't really doing the work if you move faster than that. Momentum is.

Should I workout everyday?

How often you choose to workout is up to you. I always advise beginners to start slowly. A very important rule is to allow your muscles at least 24 hours of rest before lifting weights again. So for example, if you work your biceps today, let them rest tomorrow. I know you will be eager to strength train everyday, but those muscle fibers need time to relax and repair. Strength training beginners must rest just like the pros! A good program will include several days of strength training, several days of rest, and proper exercises for each major muscle group.

About the author:

Lynn VanDyke is the owner of <http://strength-training-woman.com> She is certified in personal training, nutrition and yoga. Don't miss out on her ezine- No Limits. It is jam-packed with powerful strength training advice and quickly becoming the must-read for all things strength training.

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Strength Training Guidelines

This document is to serve as a basic guideline for designing your own strength training routine. It is not an exercise prescription and does not take into account any previous injuries or physical conditions. It is highly recommended you see a physician before starting any exercise routine.

Men vs Women

Men and women are created very differently and correspondingly must train differently. First of all women have a fraction of the testosterone necessary to build large amounts of muscle mass, therefore it is counterproductive for a female to train on a heavy resistance mass building routine. In my experience very few females are desirous of building large muscles, in fact this is probably the most common anxiety women have concerning strength training. Second, it is important to note that the single most significant factor in determining body shape is your pre-set genetic code. The maximum your muscle can hypertrophy (get bigger) was largely determined before you were born. That is not to say that you can not drastically change the shape and size of your body, just that it is important to set realistic and attainable goals.

With these facts in mind women and men generally proceed slightly different with a strength training plan. Females use lighter resistance and more repetitions whereas males who want to build muscle mass use heavier weights, increased resistance, and fewer repetitions. If you are a male not wanting to increase the size of your muscles or a female wanting to "get big" this book is not for you. It is written from the prospective of the most common goals of strength training for men and women. "Toning" is not a specific goal and is an ambiguous term that in my experience implies both leanness and muscle size. You can use this book to build muscle size or endurance, increase strength and power.

I. Exercise Frequency

I recommend a minimum of two sessions per week of strength training for men and women to ensure continue results. If you attempt to work out more

Than three times per week you are probably wasting your time, conversely one total body workout is enough to maintain your progress, but is not enough to adequately exercise the entire body. Bear in mind that frequency is ultimately affected by the workout intensity, and that frequent low intensity strength training may not yield the same results as a few high intensity work outs.

II. Basic Guidelines for Advance Weight Training

Vary Your Routine: There should be nothing "routine" about your routine. Your body acclimates very quickly to any stress put on it. You can reach a plateau after just a few weeks of strength training. In order to keep getting results you must constantly change your routine to keep your body guessing what is coming next. I recommend you change one or more of the following on a weekly basis.

1. **Exercises:** Changing the type of resistance placed on a muscle keeps it off balance by recruiting new muscle fibers. I recommend using a Combination of machines and free weights, each having their pros and cons (we will discuss this latter). Use a variety of exercises listed in the last section for each muscle or muscle group.

2. **Rest:** Muscles can recover up to 90% after two minutes of rest

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Between sets. By reducing the rest period between sets you can place additional stress on the muscle, however, this type of training may be too intense to use every week. For men I recommend using a 1.5 - 2 Minute rest period between sets, especially for the larger muscle groups of the legs. Every fourth workout I would reduce the rest period to about half, placing additional stress on the muscles. You will not be able to lift as much weight or accomplish as many sets. At this level of intensity a chest workout may take as little as 10 minutes.

For women who are building strength and endurance I recommend a minimum of 1 minute of rest between sets.

3. Order: Change the order in which the muscles are worked weekly with the following exception, always work the bigger muscles first. You can not fully work the large muscles of your back if the biceps are exhausted, and if you can't lift your shoulders how are you going to work your chest. The following plan provides more than enough variety for changing exercise order.

2 Day Split

week 1 week 2

1-legs & shoulders 1-legs & triceps

2-Chest/Back/Triceps/Biceps 2-back / chest / biceps / shoulders

week 3 week 4 week 5

1. legs / biceps 1. legs / chest 1. legs / back

2. back / chest / triceps / 2. back / arms / 2. chest / arms / shoulders shoulders shoulders

start over with week 1

3 day split

week 1 week 2 week 3

1. back / biceps 1. chest / triceps 1. back / chest

2. legs / shoulders 2. legs / biceps 2. legs / shoulders

3 chest / triceps 3. back / shoulders 3. arms

week 4 week 5 week 6

1. chest / shoulders 1. arms 1. chest / biceps

2. legs / triceps 2. legs / chest 2. legs / back

3. back / biceps 3. back 3. triceps / shoulders

start over with week 1

Number of exercises per body part: The number of exercises performed will vary from muscle group to muscle group. For example, the biceps (a frequently overworked muscle group) will require just a

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few exercises versus the large muscles in the legs. Also, the number of exercises performed per muscles group will also be directly related to the number of sets per exercise. To keep you from getting confused I recommend the following number of exercises be performed for each muscle group. Once again this is only a guideline to adequately recruit the fibers of each muscle group. The exact number of exercises performed will vary with intensity, repetitions, and fitness level.

Men

Chest 4-6 exercises

Back 4-6

Triceps 2-3

Biceps 1-2

Shoulders 2-3

Women

Chest 3-4 exercises

Back 3-4

Triceps 1-2

Biceps 1-2

Shoulders 2-3

Repetitions per exercise: When selecting the number of repetitions per set it is important to note that the intensity level. For males wanting to build mass each set should be performed to "failure with form." This simply means as many repetitions you can do to momentary muscle failure while maintaining proper form. Women may not need to train this intensely and should concentrate on getting a good muscle "burn" without complete failure.

Men: The following repetition scheme is based on protein breakdown or "tearing down" of the muscle in order to build it back up and make it stronger. More reps will not stress the muscle enough and too few will stress it too much and may promote injury.

Repetitions per set (cont.)

Men

2 sets 3 sets 4 sets

- 10 reps- 12-12

- 6 reps- 8-10

- 6- 8

- 4

Women: Women do not need to "pyramid" like men and may perform the same number of repetitions per set.

1 set 2 sets 3 sets

- 16 reps- 12 to 20- 12 to 20

Weight: I often tell my clients that the amount of weight they are lifting is not relevant. This is for several reasons. Because you are changing your routine to keep your body "off guard" you may not be able to lift the same amount as your last work out. For example, if you started out fresh with a

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dumbbell press last week and lifted to failure with 4 repetitions of 60 #'s, and this week you did two sets of push-ups prior to performing the same exercise, you may only be able to lift 45 #'s for 4 reps. If you are lifting each set to failure you have reached the maximum load your muscle can take for X number of reps, and you can not go beyond that limit. This is your primary objective, not to increase the amount of resistance. The amount you are able to lift on any given day is based on factors such as diet, rest between sets, prior activities, and stress. Do not get discouraged by the amount you are lifting. Concentrate on using proper form to muscle failure. Your first set should be used to warm up the joint and muscle and should be a comfortable weight. Use your first set to judge the progressive weight of your next sets. If your warm up set was very easy, and your goal is to lift 8 reps to failure on your next, you will know to adjust the weight accordingly. Once you get comfortable with your bodies abilities, selecting resistance will become intuitive. "Pyramiding" simply means matching the resistance to the number of repetitions. An example of pyramiding for 3 sets of 12-10-6 repetitions would be using 20 #'s on your first set, 25#'s on the second, and 30#'s on the third.

III. Advanced Training Techniques

There are several ways to stimulate muscle growth and endurance without necessarily increasing resistance. These techniques are used to keep your body adjusting and avoiding plateaus. It is important to note that each technique should be used sparingly because it might be too intense to use on a regular basis, and may not give a muscle group adequate time to recover and repair.

If you are beginning to strength train I would avoid most of these techniques until you have adequate tendon, joint, and ligament strength.

1. Drop Set: Start with 1 warm up set. Select the amount of resistance you would normally use on your last set to failure. Lift to failure, drop 10% resistance, and lift to failure and drop another 20%, lift to failure, drop 50% and do as many reps as you can. You can do a drop set with four, three, two, or a single drop in weight.

2. Compound Set: A compound set is performing two exercises for the same body part back to back with no rest in-between. Ex. bench press / push up; preacher curl / hammer curl; triceps kickback / bench dip. Compound sets will quickly bring a muscle group to failure therefore it is unnecessary to perform multiple exercises.

3. Super Set: A super set works opposing muscle groups back to back with no rest in-between sets. An example would be performing a bicep curl and triceps extension, leg extension (quadriceps) and leg curl (hamstrings), seated row (back) and chest press. Super sets are great for minimizing the amount of time needed to workout.

4. Partial: Normally an exercise works a joint through a complete range of motion. Partial are used when the muscles are too fatigued to do a complete range of motion and attempt to squeeze the last bit of strength out of them. Once you have reached failure in the full range, complete several more reps to failure using the last half of the range of motion.

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5. Negatives: You can accomplish just as much in the lowering or negative phase of an exercise as the positive or exertion phase. The negative phase for a bicep curl would be lowering the weight to the starting position. For biomechanical reason your muscles can accommodate 20% more resistance in this phase therefore increased weight and usually a partner are needed. Negatives increase the load on tendons, joints, and ligaments therefore I use negatives on only my most stable clients who have been strength training for some time. You can perform a form of negative resistance by taking as much as ten seconds to lower the weight. This is much safer and easier on the joint. Note that negatives are used for mass building not endurance.

6. Super Slow: When you work out you attempt to recruit as many of the fibers in a muscle as possible; at failure you are achieving maximum recruitment. The super slow method is an effective way to recruit muscle fiber without using a lot of weight. Simply take ten seconds to perform both the positive and negative phases of an exercise. You will want to use lower weight. The first few reps will be easy but the muscle will quickly begin to burn. Because the super slow method is tedious I do not recommend its' use in an entire workout. I would use this method sparingly in one set per body part.

7. Rep Sets: Your muscles are composed of mix different fibers, some are used for short bursts of power others for endurance. Generally speaking the power fibers hypertrophy, or get bigger than the endurance fibers, but the endurance fibers still can be worked. A rep set works a muscle group using low weight and high repetitions versus the normal mass building routine. I use a single rep set occasionally at the end of a workout for a muscle group.

8. Pre-Exhaustion: An example of pre-exhausting the chest would be to perform two sets of push-ups to failure prior to doing your bench press. I like to schedule pre-exhaustive outlines approximately every four weeks. Use light weight and high reps isolating the same muscle group you will use on your next exercise.

9. Burn Out Set: A burn out set is similar to a drop set. Perform your normal set group (ex 12-10-6) of an exercise, immediately following the last rep performed drop the weight in half and continue to do as many reps as you can to failure.

IV. The Exercises

Compound versus Isolation exercises: For the sake of simplicity we will assume your body can be worked in two ways, by tackling each muscle individually or by working a group of muscles at once. When we work an individual muscle or a muscle group that acts on a joint in the same manner, it is called an isolation exercise. Examples of isolation exercises for the legs are leg extensions (quadriceps), leg curls (hamstrings), and calf raises. Compound exercises work several muscles or muscle groups at once. Examples of compound exercises for the legs include squats, leg presses, and lunges which work the glutes, hamstrings, and quadriceps as well as a variety of smaller support muscles.

Once again I recommend using a variety of compound and isolation exercises. Sometimes I pre-exhaust my quadriceps with leg extensions making them work extra hard when I perform squats, or I finish my leg presses with hamstring curls to really make sure I got everything out of them.

Alternate between isolation and compound exercises but remember the large compound movements should be the emphasis of your workouts.

Training For Power and Strength

About the Author

Matt Russ has coached and trained athletes around the country and internationally. He currently holds licenses by USAT, USATF, and is an Expert level USAC coach. Matt has coached athletes for CTS (Carmichael Training Systems), is an Ultrafit Associate. Visit www.thesportfactory.com for more information.

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Strength Training: 10 Things You Must Know

Lets face it everybody knows that strength training builds muscle but did you know that it does more much more for you in the health stakes. Lets have a look at these strength training tips one by one and you will see what a difference this valuable tool will make to your general health:

Weights Improve Immunity - Immune strength depends on the availability of the amino acid glutamine and your muscles have to supply the glutamine to your immune system in order for it to work.

The more muscle you have the more abundant the glutamine supply, and other things being equal, the better your immune system works.

Weights Grow Bone - A study at Stanford University showed clearly that about 20% of bone mineral density is dependent on maintaining muscle.

A new study reported in February 2000 in the British Journal of Sports Medicine shows that even in elderly women, a one- year weight-training program increased their strength by 20- 30%, with a significant increase in bone density.

Weights Combat Diabetes - New studies published between 1995 and 2000 show that weight training has an unexpected benefit - it improves glucose tolerance in patients with Type 2 (adult-onset) diabetes.

In one of these studies, post-menopausal women with diabetes followed a weight-training program for four months. Their glucose sensitivity to a challenge improved by an average of 29%.

Weights Wack Arthritis - At Tufts University in the USA, researches gave patients with rheumatoid arthritis 10 weeks of high-intensity weight training.

Results showed significant reductions in joint pain and fatigue and a big gain in strength. Results showed that the weight work caused a significant decline in arthritis activity.

Weights Raise Testosterone - Did you know that strength training is one of the best exercises to raise testosterone levels in men and women! With strength training the levels of both testosterone and growth hormone rise dramatically.

Since loss of strength and muscle mass are the prime causes of most age-related diseases a lifelong strength training program is one of the best insurance policies for a better quality of life for both men and women.

Avoid Muscle Loss - although endurance exercise improves our cardiovascular fitness, it does not prevent the loss of muscle tissue.

Only strength training maintains our muscle mass and strength throughout our mid-life years. After

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the age of 20 up to 1/2 pound of muscle tissue is lost per year in both males and females owing to the normal ageing process.

By Strength Training once a week using all the major muscle groups until you are unable to push each exercise for another repetition, 3-4 exercises, and 15 -20 minutes max training time. Keep getting stronger, Smile, be positive and live life.

Avoid Metabolic Rate Reduction - because muscle is very active tissue, muscle loss is accompanied by a reduction in our resting metabolism.

Research indicates that an average adult experiences a 5% reduction in metabolic rate every decade of life. Only high intensity strength training performed once or twice a week with prescribed rest periods can avoid this.

Increase Muscle Mass - because most adults do not perform strength exercise, they need to first replace the tissue that has been lost through inactivity. Fortunately research shows that a standard strength training program can increase muscle mass by about 4 kg or 10 lbs over a ten-week period.

Increase Metabolic Rate - Research reveals that adding 10 lbs of muscle increases our resting metabolism by 7% and our daily calorie requirements by 15%.

At rest, 2 lbs of muscle requires 77 calories per day for tissue maintenance and during exercise, muscle energy utilization increases dramatically.

Adults who replace muscle through sensible strength exercise use more calories all day long thereby reducing the likelihood of fat accumulation.

Reduce Body Fat - In a 1994 study, strength exercise produced 10 lbs of fat loss after two months of training, even though the subjects were eating 155 more calories per day.

That is, a basic strength-training program resulted in 8 lbs more muscle, 10 lbs less fat and more calories per day food intake.

Increase Bone Mineral Density - The effects of progressive resistance exercise are similar for muscle tissue and bone tissue.

The same training stimulus that increases muscle strength also increases bone density and mineral content. A 1993 study demonstrated significant increases in the bone mineral density of the upper femur after four months of strength training.

So, now you can go ahead with your strength training endeavours knowing that you will be experiencing all these benefits found in the above tips.

Gary Matthews is the author of the popular fitness eBooks Maximum Weight Loss and Maximum Weight Gain. Please visit <http://www.maximumfitness.com> right now for your 'free' muscle building

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Success with Strength Training

Strength training is the most effective way to turn your body into a fat burning machine and stay in great shape! It is the most productive form of exercise there is! In order to be successful with strength training there are some basic principles that must be followed if you want to receive the many benefits which strength training has to offer! The three most critical factors are progressive overload, intensity, and recovery.

Progressive overload simply means that you must force your muscles to work harder each time. That means you can't use the same weight every workout, regardless of how many sets or reps you do. The best way to do this is by attempting to increase the resistance / weight used and, or increase the number of repetitions performed at each workout.

Intensity is also very important. You must force your body to increase its strength. For example, if you typically do 3 sets of 10 reps on the leg press at 115 pounds, and your legs are capable of doing 16 reps, why is your body going to make any improvements? Your body will only add muscle if you force it to work at a higher level than it is used to. The most effective way to overload your muscles is to perform one or two sets per exercise, and continue each set to muscular failure. That means continuing each set until no more repetitions are possible. Challenge yourself!

Once you have overloaded the target muscle group you must then allow for proper recovery and over compensation. This means you must rest long enough to allow for recovery of the targeted muscle group, the nervous system, refill glycogen stores (Energy stored within your muscles), and also allow enough time for the muscles to make improvements or increases. This process takes time. Generally, it takes between 2-7 days to recover from a strength workout! The harder you work the longer it takes your body to repair. Don't short-circuit your progress by strength training too often!

Basic Guidelines for Successful Strength Training

- Strength train no more than three times per week!
- Perform 1-2 sets per exercise!
- Choose 1-2 exercises for small muscle groups and 2-3 for large muscle groups. (ex. 2-3 exercises for legs, back, chest, and 1-2 for arms, shoulders, etc.)
- Choose no more than 8-10 exercises and work hard on them! . Always keep a record of all workouts! . Take each set to failure or fatigue!
- Perform each exercise SLOWLY! Force the muscle to do the work -- NOT momentum!
- As soon as you see a slow down in progress it's time to make a change to your program!

Below are some sample workouts and frequently asked questions regarding strength training.

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Full-body Workout 1-2 x per week (approx. 30-40 mins.)

Lat pull-down 2 sets Chest press 2 sets Leg press 2 sets

Lateral raise 1 set Bicep curl 1 set

Triceps pushdown 1 set Leg curl 1 set

Leg extension 1 set

Upper / Lower Split

2-3 x per week (approx. 25-40 mins)

A. Upper

Seated row 2 sets

Shoulder press 2 sets

Lat pull-down 1 set

Pectoral fly 1 set

Lateral raise 1 set

Bicep curl 1 set

Triceps pushdown 1 set

B. Lower

Leg curl 2 sets

Glute machine 1 set

Leg press 2 sets

Leg extension 1 set

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How do I lose the flab on the back of my arm or my spare tire?

A. It is physically impossible to only lose fat in one area. What you can do is decrease body fat by burning more calories than you consume. Increase muscle tissue with strength training and burn more calories all day long, even while you are sleeping!

Q. How often should I strength train if my goal is to burn fat?

A. 2-3 times per week would be great! You will build muscle tissue, which burns calories 24 hours a day, and you will decrease the chance for excess calories to be stored as fat!

Q. What if I don't want to bulk up? I just want to tone.

A. If it were that easy to bulk or get big nearly every guy in the gym would be huge! Women generally don't have the genetic potential to build large muscles due to hormonal differences. Plus, don't forget that adding muscle tissue to your body is a good thing! It makes everything you do much easier, reduces the chance for injury, and increases your metabolism!

Q. How many sets and repetitions should I do?

A. This will vary depending upon your goal. If you are training to increase strength, do fewer sets but higher intensity (1-2 sets to failure per exercise). If training for muscle size, perform multiple sets (2-4 sets, but only 1 to failure). The number of repetitions will vary also depending upon the speed at which you move the weight and your goals. In general, shoot for 8-12 reps.

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Q. What are the benefits of strength training?

A. Strength training, if done correctly, can make some major changes to your body and mind! Here are just a few:

1. Increased metabolism
2. Increased strength and flexibility
3. Increased muscle tone
4. Reduced stress levels

For more information on how you can maximize the benefits of strength training, please call me at 240-731-3724 or e-mail jesse@achieve-fitness.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jesse Cannone is a certified personal trainer, nutritionist, and best-selling fitness author. Sign up to receive his free email course, Muscle Building Tips which is full of powerful tips and techniques for maximizing strength and size. <http://www.seriousstrengthtraining.com>

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Top 10 Benefits of Strength Training for Women

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"Women are finally warming up to free weights, and it is a beautiful thing!" states Lynn VanDyke, owner of <http://strength-training-woman.com>. It's true that women are recognizing strength training as a major player in the battle against fat loss. Here are the top 10 benefits women receive from strength training:

- 1) Increased Metabolic Rate- adding muscle increases our metabolism naturally.
- 2) Increasing and Restoring Bone Density- prevent and fight osteoporosis by building strong bones.
- 3) Increased Lean Muscle Mass- each pound of lean muscle mass burns 35-50 calories per day.
- 4) Injury Prevention- a solid foundation strengthens our bones, ligaments, and tendons.
- 5) Improved Balance- strong leg and core muscles help stabilize us.
- 6) Decreased Risk of Coronary Disease- strength training can reduce blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- 7) Aids Rehabilitation and Recovery- the best way to strengthen and recover from an injury is to slowly build your strength around the injured area.
- 8) Enhanced Performance in Sports, Exercise and Life In General- climbing stairs, carrying the kids, or walking with your spouse becomes more enjoyable.
- 9) Aging Gracefully- strong muscles build a strong body. Strength training and fitness can help keep aging bodies in well-working condition.
- 10) Feeling Better and Looking Better- strength training reduces overall body fat, it tones our muscles and it builds confidence.

These top 10 benefits all come for free when you begin a proper strength training routine. Be sure to check with your doctor before beginning any new fitness program.

About the Author

Lynn VanDyke is the proud owner of

<http://strength-training-woman.com/31-no-holds-barred-answers.html> . Her newest ebook has been rated the #1 Fitness ebook on the net by the No Limits subscribers.

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Top Ten Reasons To Add Strength Training To Your Daily Routine

1. Strength training tones, builds and firms your body.

Using any type of resistance (bands, weights, water, etc.) tones and builds the muscles. For certain exercises, even body weight can accomplish this. The muscle will become firmer and the skin around the muscle will tighten. This produces a more sculpted look.

2. Strength training burns body fat.

The higher your muscle to fat ratio, the more muscle on your body. The more muscle on your body, the more fat you'll burn because it takes more calories to maintain muscle.

3. Strength training builds strong bones.

Bone density can be increased by strength training. Therefore, reducing the risk of Osteoporosis.

4. Strength training can be done with very little equipment.

Most people think they need expensive equipment to begin a strength training program. Not true! All you need is a set of hand held weights or several sets of weights.

5. Strength training is fun and motivating.

You may not feel motivated to begin a program at first, but after a few weeks of strength training, you'll notice a more sculpted body. Then your motivation will build and you'll want more of that same result. When performed in a group setting, strength training is even more fun and motivating.

6. Strength training helps rid us of mental and physical stress.

Due to the level of concentration needed when strength training and the endorphins that are being released during exercise, stress levels are greatly reduced and you'll have a clearer head!

7. Appetite is improved due to strength training.

You learn to listen to your body and feel what it needs. After a session of weight training you may be hungry but it's not usually for "junk food." The body usually begins to crave whatever it needs to replenish energy after a strenuous workout. You'll find yourself heading for fruit, yogurt, or protein.

8. Strength training is for both male and female.

Yes, women should be strength training right along with men. No, a woman won't wake up one morning looking like a man!! Women don't have the hormones to pack on the muscle like men do. Women who strength train will end up with shapely, sculpted bodies that look healthy and toned.

9. Strength training means your scale weight is irrelevant.

Strength training adds muscle and reduces body fat. Muscle is denser than fat. Therefore, you will not need to pay attention to your weight on a scale if you're strength training. The scale may show you're weight increasing but it may be because you're adding muscle. Learn to judge by your appearance, how you feel and how your clothes are fitting.

10. Strength training is a method of self care that will get you many compliments!!

Do this for yourself! Take care of your body now - it's never too late. Even senior citizens are

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strength training with amazing results. If you're shy about accepting compliments - you'll be learning how to accept them because many will come your way once you begin a strength training program.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monique is a survivor of adversity! She believes there are blessings in our struggles. Monique is also the owner of Trinity Coaching Services, a company that provides personal development coaching services. In addition, Monique is a competitive bodybuilder, wife, mother, and published author. To learn more about Monique and personal coaching visit:

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Train for Muscular Strength, Not for Muscular Size

Train Muscular Strength, Muscular Power and Muscular Endurance for Functional Strength Performance... Not Muscular Size for "Appearance".

Training for muscular strength, power and endurance will bring about more functional improvements than training for muscular size or appearance.

There is a big difference between training for muscle mass and training for muscular strength, power and endurance.

Each type of muscular strength must be trained for optimum performance under any circumstance.

Fitness is a compromise between the physical abilities of cardiorespiratory endurance, strength, power, speed, flexibility, balance, coordination, agility, accuracy and toughness... and muscular strength is a compromise between maximum strength, power and strength endurance.

Maximum Strength Maximum strength is how much force can be generated by the muscles and skeletal system for one, all-out effort.

You One-Rep Max is an indicator of this type of muscular strength.

Power Power is strength per unit of time... I like to call this Explosive Power.

This type of muscular strength is measured by the ability to move a weight from one point to another with speed... therefore it is often called Speed Strength.

Strength Endurance Strength endurance is the ability to be as strong as possible... for as long as possible.

This type of muscular strength is characterized by the ability to perform a strength movement repeatedly for an extended period of time without giving into fatigue or sacrificing form.

An effective physical training program should address the improvement of each type of muscular strength... Not just one type of strength at the expense of the others.

Bodybuilding type training focuses on building muscle mass... and improvement in performance and muscular strength is secondary.

This leads me to an interesting question... will your muscles get bigger by training all aspects of strength?

The answer is yes... they will get just as big as they need to get to optimize performance!

Optimize muscular strength performance... don't Maximize muscle mass.

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After all, it is always better to be stronger than you appear... than to appear stronger than you are!

One final note...

You must always keep in mind that muscular strength training is only one of many components of a well balanced physical fitness training program.

You should strive to optimize your muscular strength in conjunction with the other physical abilities... Not maximize your strength at the expense of them.

After all, meeting the challenges of sport, work and life with excellence is done through the combination and seamless flow from one physical ability to another... Not by relying on one physical skill at the expense of all the others.

About the author:

Coach Lomax is a strength, conditioning and fitness coach dedicated to building better humans for sport, work and life. Learn more at Optimum Physical Training or take his FREE Tabata Calisthenics Workout Mini Course.

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