

Power Up to Slim Down

You don't have to be Charles Atlas to power up with strength training. This kind of exercise is a key to fitness for everyone – especially seniors. Stacks of scientific studies prove this. In fact, senior muscles may benefit more from strength training than young ones.

Strength training has many names. Resistance training, weight lifting, working out, and pumping iron are just a few. Whatever, you call it, it's more valuable, easy, and fun than you probably imagined. For instance, you may not know that strength training can rev up your metabolism and help you burn off more calories around the clock.

It gets results by "stressing" your muscles more than your humdrum daily activities do. This stress could come from doing pushups, pressing a dumbbell above your head, or curling a coffee can. Believe it or not, muscles live for this extra work. It makes them stronger and healthier.

Put the brakes on aging

You lose as much as 40 percent of your muscle strength during your adult life, health experts say. This process –called sarcopenia – starts in your 40s and 50s, when your muscle fibers begin to shrink, become less efficient, and disappear altogether. Sarcopenia leads to the weakness, poor coordination, and bad balance that many seniors suffer.

Strength training halts this process and may even reverse it. According to the latest research, your strength could jump by an amazing 100 percent if you're a weight-lifting senior. Pumping iron works because it encourages your muscles to grow and become more responsive and powerful.

Lifting weights can also build up your bones. What muscles flex during strength training, the bones around them respond like plants to sunlight – they grow.

Resistance training helps maintain bone density at any age. It doesn't take much. Just a little stress on the bones to mitigate the bone loss that is inevitable as you age.

And it doesn't matter how old you are when you start. Even seniors with osteoporosis can benefit from low-weight, high-rep resistance training. It's never too late to start preventing bone loss.

Stronger muscles and bones could help you preserve your freedom and your ability to take care of yourself. After all, you need muscles to walk up stairs and climb out of bed, not to mention carry your groceries and pick up your grandchildren.

When you follow a regular lifting program, you'll start seeing muscles you haven't seen since you were 30 years old. Strength training carves muscles until they become lean and well-defined.

And unlike fat, muscles do more than take up space. They're constantly eating up calories – three times as many as fat. They keep churning even when you're not exercising. Don't stop working out for long, though. The more you strength train, the more muscles you'll build, which will help your body burn fat faster. So add some muscles and watch the fat melt away.

Strength training could also add 20 yards to your golf drive, or some extra "umph" to your tennis serve. It may take you to a higher level in whatever sport you're active in. Moreover, extra muscles helps protect your joints and lower back during cardiovascular exercises such as jogging and bicycling.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Raymond Lee is one of the foremost experts in the health and fitness industry and is a writer specializing in body health, muscle development and dieting. He has spent countless of time and efforts conducting research and share his insightful and powerful secrets to benefit men and women all over the world. He is currently the author of the latest edition of Neck Exercises and Workouts. Don't forget to subscribe to his minicourse "15 Techniques & Tips Quickly Eliminate Neck Pain."