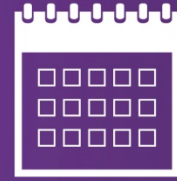




Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by 44North



INTRODUCTION TO STRENGTH TRAINING

Strength training, also known as weight lifting or resistance training, is becoming popular as people recognize its impact on long-term health. This type of exercise isn't just for athletes; anyone can benefit from regular strength training. People are incorporating strength training into their exercise routine to build muscle mass and endurance, maintain bone density, decrease injury risk and improve mobility.

This article highlights strength training and its long-term health benefits.

What Is Strength Training?

Strength training can be done at home or in a gym. It involves using one or more muscle groups to perform a specific task and may incorporate the following:

- **Body weight** and the simple force of gravity can be leveraged to perform various functional movements (e.g., squats, lunges, planks, pullups and pushups).
- **Resistance bands or tubes** provide low-impact resistance when stretched.
- **Free weights**, which are equipment not bound to the floor or a machine (e.g., dumbbells, kettlebells, barbells and medicine balls), can be used for strength training.
- **Weight machines** with adjustable weights or hydraulics can provide muscle resistance.

The key principle behind strength training is progressive overload, which means gradually increasing the amount of resistance or weight to challenge the muscles and stimulate growth. With regular practice, muscles will become stronger.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends incorporating muscle-strengthening exercises at least twice a week, combined with aerobic activity.

Benefits of Strength Training

Regular strength training not only improves athletic performance but also helps you perform the work of everyday life. Strength training allows you to perform daily tasks—such as climbing stairs, lifting children, carrying groceries and doing other household chores—more easily, which is especially important as you age.

Strength training has physical and mental health benefits and can increase one's quality of life. Regular strength training may result in the following:

- Increased muscle mass
- Stronger, denser bones
- Boosted metabolism



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- Better flexibility and mobility
- Reduced risk of injury or falls
- Lowered risk of heart disease and diabetes
- Elevated mood, self-esteem and brain health

Strength training provides several benefits, but start slowly and focus on your form first. As you get more comfortable, you can add more weight or resistance and increase repetitions. If adding regular strength training to your fitness routine feels intimidating, online videos, small group classes or trainers can help.

Conclusion

Incorporating strength training into your fitness routine can yield significant long-term health benefits. Whether lifting weights at the gym or using resistance bands at home, consistency and gradual progression are key. Embrace strength training as a vital component of your overall wellness plan and enjoy its numerous benefits for your body and mind.

Always speak with your health care provider before beginning a new exercise program.