

Q. Why should I do strength training exercises?

A. You might think strength training is just for people who want to build muscle or play sports. But it's actually something everyone should do.

Adults should be active enough to sweat for least 30 minutes a day, or a total of 150 minutes a week. But it's not the only form of exercise you need. For best health, you also need to do strength training or resistance exercise at least two days a week.¹

Strength training is any form of physical activity that requires your muscles to work against resistance. Some examples include:

- Body weight exercises (e.g. squats, push-ups, pull-ups, planks)
- Weight lifting
- Carrying groceries, a backpack, or briefcase
- Chores that require lifting, pushing, or pulling
- Even going from sitting to standing is a form of strength training

4 Health Benefits of Strength Training

Activities like walking, jogging and cycling make you breathe deeper. They strengthen your heart and lungs. But what can you do to build stronger bones and muscles? Strength training. This form of exercise or physical activity can help:



- 1. Prevent loss of strength and muscle mass.** After age 30, adults lose about 3 to 5 percent of strength and muscle mass per year.² That might not seem like a lot, but it adds up over time. The good news: Strength training and a healthy diet can help slow the loss of muscle mass and strength as you age.
- 2. Improve bone health.** About 54 million adults in the U.S. have weak bones. It's a major risk factor for falls and fractures. But you can do something about it. Strength training makes your bones stronger by increasing bone density.³
- 3. Avoid injuries.** If you neglect to keep your bones strong and healthy, your risk for injuries goes up...a lot. Weak bones and muscles make you 2.3 times more likely to break a bone when you fall.⁴ Just two days of strength training a week can help you keep your balance better and be more flexible to help prevent injuries.
- 4. Support brain function.** Feel stressed, anxious, depressed? These and other brain-related problems can make it hard for you to work, make good choices, and get things done. Medicine and counseling can help. But research shows resistance training can

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also improve brain function and mental health.⁵ Want to look better, feel better, and reduce your risk for injuries as you age? Make strength training a regular part of your life.

Strength training guidelines

1. Choose exercises that work all the major muscle groups (chest, back, shoulders, arms, legs).
2. Perform one set of 8 to 12 reps per exercise.
3. Make time for strength training at least two days a week.

References

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