

Weight Training: Health Benefits for Every Age



Most of us know that regular exercise provides many benefits. However, as we age, we lose muscle mass, bone density and strength. Weight training, also called **resistance or strength training**, can substantially slow or reduce these effects of aging.

Weight training is any exercise where muscles work and contract against an object. Push-ups, lifting weights and

stretching with elastic bands are examples of resistance exercises.

Weight-training programs are based on what are called “reps” and “sets.” Repetitions, or reps, is the number of times you do an exercise. Sets is the number of cycles of reps. Beginners should start with weights that allow only 15 to 20 repetitions of a single exercise. After several weeks, when you can do these easily, slowly increase the amount of weight.

Increasing the amount of weight will increase strength, while staying at the same weight level will maintain that level of strength. The following tips can also help:

- **Stretch and warm up before beginning your weight program.**
- **Drink fluids between sets.**
- **A little soreness is to be expected, but stop if you feel pain.**
- **Don't work the same muscle groups on consecutive days.**
- **Rest 48 to 72 hours between workouts.** Studies show that muscles build strength and grow as they recover.

With weight training, the benefits are both immediate and ongoing. Muscles respond quickly, which provides great motivation for continuing to exercise. Healthy adults should perform weight training 2 to 3 times per week. In addition to **increasing strength**, weight training can **improve psychological well-being, improve sleep**, and **prevent osteoporosis, diabetes and obesity**, as well as **improve balance**.

Always check first with your doctor before beginning any weight-training program. Then talk with us to develop a program that will meet your goals, as well as teach you the proper form to avoid injury.