

Lifting Weights Improves Quality of Life

By Richard J. Wolff, RD, LDN

According to a new study published by the American College of Sports Medicine, lifting weights early in life helps seniors prevent muscle loss and improves independence later in life. This study suggests that adults should begin a strength training regimen as early as possible to maximize the benefits – which will help prevent age-related muscle loss that can lead to disability and loss of independence.

A research team from the University of Michigan compiled data from 49 studies to determine that older adults who strength train can build significant amounts of muscle, counteracting the ½ lb. loss of muscle per year that occurs in sedentary adults over age 50. The report, “Influence of Resistance Exercise on Lean Body Mass in Aging Adults: A Meta-Analysis,” was published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, the official journal of the American College of Sports Medicine.

The findings of this analysis are significant, given the millions of U.S. adults affected by muscle loss, says Mark Petersons, lead author of the study¹. The analysis recommends progressive strength training programs that gradually increase the weight lifted to facilitate long-term growth in muscle mass. The researchers reviewed over 5000 references for this analysis and selected studies with an average participant age of at least 50 years. The analysis also included studies that utilized supervised, full-body workouts.

Several national surveys indicate that fewer than 15% of U.S. adults engage in muscle-strengthening exercise. Low compliance is not surprising, considering all the variables that require attention (proper form, speed of movement, range of motion, resistance, number of repetitions, number of sets, progression and frequency, to name a few). Compared to aerobic activity, strength training can feel overwhelming to the average person.

Despite the confusion, effective strength training can be simple. In 2008, Dr. Wayne Westcott of the South Shore YMCA presented research at the Club Industry Conference that showed short, simple workouts produce better results than long, complicated workouts. At MEDFITNESS we embrace these principles. Our short, simple workouts allow our members to work hard and get great results!

References

1. Weights Help Seniors Stay Independent Longer, *Athletic Business Newswire*, Tuesday, February 01, 2011

MEDFITNESS specializes in personal training programs that provide supervised, full-body, strength workouts. Our programs are progressive and lead to significant increases in muscle and strength. To experience our trademarked workout, schedule a *Free Trial Workout* by calling (630) 762-1784 or visiting www.medfitnessprogram.com