

# The New Anti-Arthritis Workout

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In a country plagued with chronic disease, it's not surprising that nearly 50 million Americans suffer from arthritis. The pain and swollen joints often associated with arthritis can make an active lifestyle seem impossible. For decades, the medical community has been largely unsuccessful at getting people with arthritis to exercise. An example of this gap is the Arthritis Foundation's Exercise Program. The program has been shown to be effective at improving mobility and pain management in people with arthritis, yet less than 1% of people with arthritis participate in this program.<sup>1</sup>

Medical professionals agree the potential benefits of such a program are significant, especially for older women who have the greatest prevalence of arthritis. In the meantime health agencies, including the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have been working to develop evidence-based programs that improve function among adults with arthritis. A breakthrough in this area comes from a study published in the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*.<sup>2</sup> The study examined the effects of a community-based strength training program in women 55 years of age and older with arthritis.

In the 12-week study, women who completed two strength workouts per week achieved a 32% increase in lower body strength, while the control group (women who were not strength training) experienced a 7.3% decrease in strength. There was an 11.6% improvement in mobility among the strength-trained group and no change in the control group. Flexibility of the lower back and hamstrings also improved by 18.4% in the strength-trained group but did not change in the control group.

This study shows that participating in a strength training program significantly increases lower body strength in older women with arthritis. In fact significant improvements in all areas of physical function were seen in the strength training group. The strength training program was also well tolerated as indicated by the high level of compliance and no adverse effects being reported!

Given that millions of men and women suffer from arthritis, this study provides a lot of hope! Increasing your strength can help you live a more active, healthy lifestyle!

Here's how this impressive anti-arthritis workout was structured:

1. The workouts were progressive (the amount of weight lifted gradually increased) with the goal of reaching an intensity level that participants described as "getting

- hard” to “very hard.” This intensity range was chosen because it has been shown to increase strength and muscle mass.
2. The workouts were full body, targeting the major muscle groups (arms, chest, shoulders, back and legs).
  3. The program included two strength workouts per week.
  4. The workouts were supervised by trained fitness instructors.
  5. Approximately 5 minutes of stretching was combined with the strength workout to enhance flexibility and range of motion.

This study demonstrates that a strength training program can be well tolerated and beneficial, especially for older women with arthritis. This is important because the prevalence of arthritis is expected to increase significantly over the next 25 years. The effectiveness of this program shows its potential as an evidence-based program that improves strength and function among older women with arthritis.

With just two 30-minute strength workouts per week, men and women can improve arthritis symptoms and begin to take control of their health! If you suffer from arthritis, don't just sit on the sidelines. Take the next step by applying the principles of this remarkable anti-arthritis workout!

#### References

1. Arthritis Rheum. 2003;49(3):463-470.
2. American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine. 2009;3(6):466-473

### **Your Anti-Arthritis Workout**

The MEDFITNESS Program offers a simple solution for people living with arthritis. Our full-body strength workouts take less than 30 minutes and don't require an appointment. Every workout is supervised by a fitness instructor to ensure maximum safety and effectiveness. To experience our remarkable program, schedule a *Free Trial Workout* by calling (630) 762-1794. Get additional information about the MEDFITNESS Program at [www.medfitnessprogram.com](http://www.medfitnessprogram.com).

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