

Strength Linked to Fat Loss

By Richard J. Wolff, RD, LDN

Losing weight in this day and age can be very challenging given the unsupportive environment we live in. While most Americans would agree nutrition and exercise play important roles in weight loss, successful strategies are not always applied. An example of this gap shows up in a study by fitness expert Dr. Wayne Westcott.

Over the past decade the use of inexpensive hydraulic strength-training equipment has become a popular addition to fitness and recreation centers. It has become especially popular in women-only facilities like *Curves*[®]. To test the effectiveness of this equipment, Dr. Westcott conducted a study comparing hydraulic strength-training equipment to weight-stack strength-training equipment (such as the equipment used at MEDFITNESS). Dr. Westcott tested 32 members of a weight management program (23 women and 9 men). One of the goals of the study was to determine if weight-stack strength-training equipment is more effective than hydraulic strength-training equipment when it comes to producing fat loss.

In the study the use of weight-stack strength-training equipment produced greater fat loss than the use of hydraulic strength-training equipment. Based on his research, Dr. Westcott recommends that individuals who begin exercising on hydraulic strength-training equipment switch to weight-stack strength-training equipment as a way of facilitating greater progress after reaching a plateau¹.

Scientists agree that progressing to heavier weights is essential when it comes to strength training. According to Dr. Miriam Nelson, exercise scientist at Tuft's University and author of *Strong Women Stay Slim* "If you don't keep increasing the load as your muscles *get* stronger you won't progress very far."² At MEDFITNESS we see the same outcome. Members who push themselves to lift heavier weights (with proper form) experience the greatest improvements in fitness.

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1. Westcott, W., J. Annesi and R. LaRosa Loud. Effects of exercise focus on strength training performance. *Fitness Management* pp. 28-33, Sept. 2003.
2. Nutrition Action Health Letter, September 2004, Volume 31, Number 7