

Strength Training: Essential for Your Health & Fitness!

In recent years, the American College of Sports Medicine, the CDC, and the American Heart Association have begun to understand the crucial role of strength training in attaining and maintaining optimal health. Hence, the guidelines that these organization establish for exercise now include strength (or resistance) training for all adults...including those over the age of 65! Here is a recent statement made by the American Heart Association (2007) for those with heart disease:

DALLAS, July 17 – Once taboo for people with heart problems, resistance weight training actually has significant benefits for people with cardiovascular disease (CVD), according to an American Heart Association scientific statement published in Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association.

“Just like we once learned that people with heart disease benefited from aerobic exercise, we are now learning that guided, moderate weight training also has significant benefits,” said Mark Williams, Ph.D., the statement writing group chair and professor of medicine in the Division of Cardiology at Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Neb.

Even with the disease that kills more Americans than any other, resistance training is recommended. Are you convinced yet? Read further to understand the “how”, the “why” and the wonders of strength training!

How does one begin to do resistance training? Please, please, please (I cannot emphasize this enough), hire a professional. I have seen so many people injure themselves or not get the results they want when traveling in this realm without the assistance of a pro. There is a science to strength training. I hope you are not one of many who believe they can just go to the gym and figure it out – this ignorance will, more often than not, lead to difficulties. Technique, programming, variety, safety, and results are all components a professional can offer you. It is also important to be familiar with the type of equipment you are using because each one offers something unique. Cables, free weights (dumbbells), Nautilus, Cybex, Free Motion, and Hammer – to name a few – have varying demands that they place on the body. Do you know their differences? Invest in your health...without it, all the material things in your life will be meaningless. Here are a few guidelines for hiring a qualified professional:

*Certifications to look for include: NASM, ACSM, NSCA, RESISTANCE TRAINING SPECIALIST (through Tom Purvis), and ACE are well recognized and viable certifications. If the professional does not know these initials and what they mean – WALK AWAY!

*Two or more years of training experience.

*Observe the trainer – is he/she fully engaged with their clients or are they looking around and not paying attention? You want someone who is truly committed to their profession and to you!

Now for the “why”- here are just some of the benefits of resistance training:

1. Increased:
 - Muscle mass
 - Bone density
 - Muscle strength & endurance
2. Reduced low back pain (assuming your posture and technique are proper)
3. Reduces risk of cardiovascular disease
4. Improves mobility
5. Reduced body fat; improved body composition
6. Reduced arthritic pain; joint stability
7. Improved posture

You do not have to spend hours in the gym to receive these benefits. You can get a thorough and effective workout done in 30-40 minutes, 2x per week. This is not much time considering that you have 168 hours in a week to do whatever else you need to do. I hope I have convinced at least some of you to venture into the world of resistance training. An extra bonus to strength training is that you will feel more confident and capable...I promise!!!

(If you have health and fitness topics you are interested in (or questions), please feel free to suggest them: cpavell@fitnesspluswellness.com)

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Define it

Guidelines for it

Benefits of it