

Benefits of Strength Training

Willis Vincent, CSCS, Fitness Supervisor
Avera McKennan Fitness Center

So often as a Personal Trainer I hear “why should I strength train?” A balanced workout regimen would always consist of some level of Strength Training. Developing a safe, efficient and effective strength training program is one of the four essential elements of optimal health. (Strength training, cardiovascular training, nutrition/weight management and flexibility training.) When properly performed, strength training can provide significant functional benefits and improvement in overall health and well-being including: increased bone, muscle, tendon and ligament strength and toughness, improved joint function, reduced potential for injury, increased bone density, a increase in metabolic rate, improved cardiac function and elevated good cholesterol, and profound influence on physical capacity and physical appearance.

Strength training is the process of exercising the muscular system with weighted resistance. We produce strength through muscle contraction. The contraction attempts to shorten the muscle. This shortening / movement, or lack there of, depends on the relationship between muscular forces and resistive forces. Many factors affect this contraction performance. The factors include: gender, age, limb length, muscle length, tendon insertion, muscle fiber type, and motor learning. These factors do not cause you to become unable to have positive gains from a strength training program. Positive affects of strength training have been shown to occur at any age, gender, limb length, etc. Below is a list of some of the benefits you will gain from an effective strength training program.

Unless we perform regular strength exercises, we lose up to ½ pound of muscle every year after age 25. This gradual decrease in lean muscle tissue means that non-training adults will experience ½ percent reduction in metabolic rate each year. This decrease in muscle tissue causes a corresponding decrease in metabolic rate, but the good news is that an increase in muscle tissue will also cause a corresponding increase in our metabolic rate.

Fight the sedentary aging process with a regular strength training program and reap the many positive benefits it has to offer.