

This resource is intended for senior athletes who exercise regularly and may not be appropriate for all older adults. Talk to your physician or physical therapist if you're interested in starting an exercise program.

Strength Training for Athletes Over 50

Strength is the ability to move or hold against resistance (your body weight, hand weights or resistance bands). **Power** is a component of strength and is the ability to use strength at higher speeds. Both are needed in sport competition as they allow athletes to jump higher, hit farther, and move faster.

How does strength change with aging?

Though strength commonly declines with age, the ability to gain strength with the right training is never lost. Applying sound strength training principles to your training routine will help you toward better performance and help protect your body from injury.

What can I do?

One of the most important aspects of strength training is to make it progressive. That means when the weight you are lifting gets easy enough to lift more than 12 times, you should increase it. If you lift the same weight, month after month you will not get stronger. However, if you cannot lift your chosen weight at least 8 times, or if it causes pain, decrease it or switch exercises. Strength training should *not* cause pain. Keep your exercises challenging. It is OK to experience temporary muscle soreness after a workout but ongoing pain is a sign of overdoing it. Working key muscle groups for just one to two sets twice a week is enough to make gains. This will give you time for other exercises and lessen the stress on your joints.

CHAIR SQUATS



Stand and sit without using your hands. Once you can do more than 12 repetitions try this from a lower surface or practice faster reps.

- Keep your knees and toes pointed straight ahead or slightly outward. Don't let them go inward or into a "knock knee" position.
- Don't stoop, keep your posture tall!
- If you have pain with this exercise, try it from a higher surface.

CHAIR SQUATS WITH RESISTANCE



For more resistance, add an elastic band under your feet, or weights in your hands. Squat until you almost reach your chair, then return to standing with tension on the band. Stay tall!

MONSTER WALKS



Place an elastic loop around your thighs, above your knees. Keeping your core engaged and your feet pointed forward side step one way until you are tired, then switch directions. You should feel this in the side of your upper thigh.

SHOULDER ROTATION



Sit or stand tall. Hold a band between your hands. Keeping your elbows at your side, pull your hands away from each other and return to the start position.

Say No to Pain!

Strength training exercises should not be painful. If an exercise causes pain, try something different!

How much should I lift?

Lower intensity → Start with lighter weight that makes you tired at **13-25** reps.

Higher intensity → Work up to heavier weight that causes fatigue at **8-12** reps.

Ready for a dose of power? Try these exercises with a little speed.

Perform 3-4 repetitions quickly, then another 3-4 times at regular speed, alternating and continuing more sets, as you are able. Be careful – don't let speed destroy your form!

To receive an exercise program specifically for you, find a local physical therapist.

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