

## Weight Training For The Elderly

By Ziemowit Mazur



We all know, or at least have heard at some point that exercise is good for us, no matter the age. While exercise benefits participants of all ages, it can be especially important for older exercisers. After 30 years of age, we lose, on average, about 0.5 percent in muscle mass per year until the age of 50. After 50, this rate speeds up rapidly. You can expect to lose an additional

30 percent of muscle mass by the time you turn 70 years old, with another 30 percent between 70 and 80 years of age. Inactive individuals lose muscle mass and strength at a faster rate than those who remain physically active. Muscle loss that continues can eventually lead to increased weakness, disability, falls and even loss of independence.

### BENEFITS, BENEFITS, BENEFITS

Here is the good news. It is never too late to start on a regular aerobic and weight training program. Weight training is especially important to slow the process of sarcopenia, or age-related skeletal muscle decline. It even has the ability to reverse its effects. Regular weight training has shown to:

- reduce blood pressure
- improve cholesterol
- enhance insulin absorption
- speed-up gastrointestinal transit
- increase bone mineral density
- alleviate low-back pain
- ease arthritic discomfort
- improve post-coronary performance
- relieve depression
- reduce body fat
- improve functional abilities

### TUFTS UNIVERSITY STUDY

Rate of adding muscle with weight training should provide you with even more encouragement. A study at Tufts University, involving older adults (ages 56 to 81) in basic weight training program for 12 weeks showed amazing results. Participants added 3 pounds of muscle and lost 4 pounds of fat weight. In short, this study showed weight training program was able to reverse many degenerative effects associated with the aging process.

### OPTIONS

While strength training can be an intimidating undertaking, its impressive benefits should motivate you to make it part of your regular exercise routine. You do not need special equipment or skills to weight train. In home training with a qualified personal trainer can ease you into resistance training in a safe and progressive manner. Many fitness centers in your community probably already offer group classes that incorporate weight training.

### Editors Note:

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Ziemowit Mazur instructs an elderly client at Fit with Z.



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