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Be Strong!

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Be Strong!

Considering the many benefits that muscular strength and endurance training brings, it is actually quite surprising that most adults do not include this type of fitness training in their life.

It's especially surprising since recommendations are for us to increase our health and fitness in this category: two non-consecutive days per week working out all major muscle groups.

Our way of life in today's world has caused us all to become much more sedentary and inactive. Do a quick self-check. How you are currently or usually sitting when you sit (which is probably most of the time)? You are probably slouching over without contracting any part of your abs. We have come to believe that this is a normal position in which to sit. It is not. We are designed to function best when we are active and to sit when we rest (which should be less than three hours per day), then we should practice active sitting (which includes contracting your core, planting your feet on the floor, contracting your gluteals and pulling your shoulders back).

Let's see if I can make this a bit more enticing for you! Here are some of the key benefits of regular muscular strength and endurance training:

- Strengthens of bones, muscles and connective tissues
- Decreased risk of injuries
- Decreased risk of chronic disease
- Increased basal metabolic rate (BMR), which helps maintain a healthy body weight
- Increased energy level
- Enhanced quality of life (daily chores and tasks become easier)

We often blame age for many of our health issues. Although there is some truth to this, many of the problems that we end up dealing with actually originate in poor fitness. Physical fitness incorporates

cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength/endurance and flexibility fitness. Very few people are actually intentional about including all these elements into a weekly fitness routine and, thus, we see many people dealing with issues and problems that are 100 percent avoidable. Do not underestimate the power of regular muscular strength and endurance training!

Contrary to popular belief, strength training can be done a number of different ways. Here are some of the non-traditional (as in, without big weight machines) ways of how you could incorporate strength training into your workout routine:

- Stability ball exercises
- Resistance band exercises
- Calisthenics exercises
- Dumbbell exercises

Unfortunately, there are many myths about strength training (I hear them all the time!) which I believe keep many people from ever wanting to try it out:

- You have to have a gym membership to strength train. (FALSE!)
- Strength training is only beneficial for men, not for women. (FALSE!)
- You must use large pieces of equipment to see results. (FALSE!)

Complete fitness includes regular strength training, and the benefits are amazing. The older you get, the more essential it becomes to *be strong* for a qualitative lifestyle (use it or lose it!). You are never too old to start. Make a positive choice today and become strong by beginning a regular strength training routine. ■



▲ Dominique Gummelt

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