

Importance of Resistance Training for Older Adults

While older adults are encouraged to do basic aerobic exercise, research has shown that resistance or strength training is just as, or even more important, in the prevention of functional decline.

Resistance training is credited with reducing signs and symptoms of numerous diseases and chronic conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis, and knee, hip, and back pain. Unlike what we have been led to believe, these conditions are not a normal phase in the aging process. Research on resistance training is conclusive. Its importance can't be denied. The rewards are indeed plentiful. Consider the following as it relates to resistance training for older adults.

- **Slows the aging process.** Resistance training is the only exercise proven to not just slow down but reverse the aging process. It is considered the primary weapon of choice for physical declines associated with aging. It prevents muscle loss that normally accompanies the aging process. With resistance training, you are leaner, firmer, stronger, and have more energy. As a result, you look, feel, think, and act much younger than your chronological age.
- **Strong bones and muscles.** As people age, they lose bones and muscles. When this happens, the likelihood of injuries as well as chronic conditions such as osteoporosis, especially among older women, increases. Resistance training strengthens muscles, tendons, ligaments, and bones thus lowering the chance of injury. It also reduces the risk of developing osteoporosis. When you have strong bones and muscles, you can enjoy daily activities such as walking, climbing, lifting, with more confidence and ease. Keeping your muscles in shape helps prevent falls that cause problems like broken hips. You are less likely to fall when your leg and hip muscles are strong.
- **Improved posture.** With resistance training, you develop strong muscles. And, strong muscles help you to maintain erect posture which not only impacts your overall appearance but it also could eliminate many of the orthopedic problems associated with the back, hips, and knees. Hip, back, and knee pain is a recurring complaint coming from older adults. Many assume that this pain is simply a by-product of the aging process. It's not!

In conclusion, resistance training keeps muscles stronger, preserves physical independence, limits the likelihood of developing a variety of chronic diseases and helps keep aging bodies looking and feeling much younger than their chronological age.

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