



Strength Training - The Secret Weapon of Weight Loss

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Diet and exercise together are much more effective for weight loss than just dieting. Those that know this usually choose to do cardiovascular exercise when on the path to weight loss, because it burns a lot of calories in a short amount of time. And those who want to lose weight often avoid strength training because they fear increasing the number on the scale with the addition of muscle to their body. But strength training provides some very important benefits to weight loss, and it's not as time consuming or complicated as one might think. In fact, it could provide just the edge you need to get you to your weight loss goals.

Even though cardiovascular exercise burns many calories while you're working out, strength training helps you to burn calories long after you've finished. This is because muscle mass burns calories. The more muscle you have, the higher your metabolism will be, and the more calories you'll burn at any given time. In addition, muscle has its own glucose storage, and takes sugar from the blood that would otherwise be deposited in fat cells.

Aside from the calorie burn muscle mass helps the body look fit and lean, like no other exercise. You can cycle, run, walk or climb stairs for hours a day and still be soft in the middle and around the edges. On the other hand when you have muscle definition from strength training your body will look (and be) stronger and firmer.

A body fat test will take this point even further: you can be thin and still be over-fat. Many thin subjects have taken the test to find they have more than 30% body fat due to their lack of muscle mass.

It's not necessary to worry about time constraints or having to join a gym. You can strength train at home, and it doesn't need to take that much time. Research shows that one exercise for each major muscle group works just fine for the average person to obtain total body strength and muscle definition.

What are the major muscle groups? There are nine of them: Front and back of the leg (quadriceps and hamstrings/buttocks), calves, chest, back, shoulders, biceps, triceps and abdominals.

One set of each exercise is sufficient as long as you lift the weight to the point where you can't lift it again. If you're not familiar with strength training jargon, picking up the weight, then lifting and lowering it continuously until you stop, is equal to one set. It's recommended that the weight be heavy enough that it can only be lifted twenty times or less per set.

At this rate, each exercise will take about 1 to 1.5 minutes, and nine exercises will take about half an hour (depending on the time you need to change from one exercise to the next). That's a small investment of time for a large return on fat loss!

It's recommended that you talk to your doctor before starting to workout. This is basic exercise information for the general public. If you have injuries or other physical limitations, this exercise may not be appropriate. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't feel good- don't do it!

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