



Strength Training is for Over 50s too!

There is growing interest in strength training as an exercise for older people. You may have read about it in the newspapers, or seen something on TV or maybe even your doctor has mentioned it. Perhaps you know someone who does it.

Strength training can help you stay healthier and independent in older age. It's a fact. If you are interested in finding out more, or even better, in taking it up, then read on.

What is strength training?

It is a series of progressive exercises that work the muscles, bones and joints using resistance. Resistance can include free weights, hand and ankle weights. The aims is to strengthen muscles retain bone density and increase joint flexibility.

Will I end up with big muscles?

No. Your muscles will become better defined and your body fat will be reduced. Regular strength training improves flexibility, balance, heart health and the strength and function of muscles and bones.

Isn't strength training just for young people?

No. Many older people do strength training. It is estimated that over 12,000 Victorian seniors do regular strength training.

I already walk and do other exercise, isn't that enough?

Research shows that for maximum benefit we need to do a range of exercise to maintain strength, flexibility and balance, as well as cardiovascular health.

So what are the benefits?

Strength training helps reduce the risk of and better manage many health conditions including osteoporosis, arthritis, diabetes, chronic heart disease, depression and anxiety. People have more strength and energy, and are better able to undertake the tasks of daily life with confidence and ease.



Do I have to be strong enough to do it?

No. Strength training can help even if you are frail. Age is no barrier either. The body responds to strength training no matter what your age or fitness level. People with a medical condition or who have been inactive should consult their doctor first.

How often do I need to do it?

For maximum benefit you should attend two, if possible three times a week for up to one hour at a time.

What happens in a strength training class?

You will start with weights that are comfortable and progress at your own pace with advice from the instructor. As your muscles get stronger you will be able to increase the weight. Even in a group setting you should progress at your own pace.

Is it expensive?

It doesn't have to be. Cost depends on many factors such as the type of program, level of supervision, qualifications of the instructor, type of equipment available and whether the program is subsidized.

What should I look for in a program?

A qualified instructor well maintained equipment and a supportive environment. Programs endorsed as Living Longer Living Stronger™ and Lift for Life® meet these requirements.

Can I do it on my own?

To get the full benefit and ensure you do it properly it's best to do it under supervision of a qualified person. Also doing it with others helps with motivation. Many gyms and community health centres offer group programs.

Where can I do it?

Facilities that offer strength training for older people include Health and Fitness Centres, YMCA, Sports and Recreation Centres, Council Leisure Centres, Community Health Centres, Neighbourhood Houses and some hospitals.

For more Information

- "Be Active Your Way" Peer education talk – Contact COTA Vic, Tel 9654 4443
- COTA's information service - Seniors Information 1300 13 50 90
- Visit COTA VIC's website – <http://www.cotavic.org.au/programs-events/>
- Your local council recreation or leisure department
- Your local community health centre
- Active Ageing Network – <http://www.activeageingnetwork.org.au/Pages/default.aspx>



Supported by

