



## Resistance Train to Prevent Muscle Loss

When it comes to muscle: use it, lose it or build it! Muscle plays a crucial role in human health; it allows us to stand, walk, balance, lift and breathe. Building and maintaining muscle is important for both men and women, because strong muscles help reduce back pain and prevent falls. Registered dietitians, personal trainers and physicians agree muscle mass is important for optimal calorie burning, dense bones and increased energy.

Consistent resistance training at all ages plays an important role in preventing both sarcopenia and osteoporosis, according to the American College of Sports Medicine. Sarcopenia, as defined by the National Institutes of Health, is slow muscle loss that occurs from aging beginning at 30 years old. An individual can lose between 3 to 8 percent of lean body muscle annually depending upon activity rates and nutrition status. Sarcopenia contributes to loss of strength, mobility issues and disability, and falls are a particular concern for older adults with sarcopenia. Resistance training at least twice a week and consuming an adequate amount of high-quality sources of protein may help to slow or partially reverse the effects of natural, gradual sarcopenia.

Resistance training may help prevent osteoporosis, a condition characterized by weak, porous bones, which then become prone to fractures. Good nutrition with adequate calcium and vitamin D consumption paired with sufficient resistance training and weight-bearing exercises, can help prevent osteoporosis, reduce severity of the disease or stop its progression.

Although resistance training strengthens and maintains the major muscle groups, it does not always equate to bulking up. Resistance training does not need to happen at the gym. While some people may prefer weight machines, free weights are the most preferred method and can be used anywhere. When using weight machines, free weights or resistance bands, selecting the proper weight is crucial to improving strength and preventing injury.

If you prefer exercises that do not require weights, exercises that use your own body weight also are a good option. Pushups, squats, planks, hip lifts and dips are just some of the numerous equipment-free resistance training options. Yoga also builds muscle using body weight while improving flexibility and reducing stress.

Incorporating resistance training into a regular exercise routine is crucial for maintaining healthy muscles and bones while increased muscle mass can boost energy and metabolism.

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; <https://www.eatright.org/fitness/training-and-recovery/building-muscle/resistance-training-to-prevent-muscle-loss>

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