

# Weightlifting for Seniors

Contributed by Webmaster

While you probably aren't looking to get buff and toned, weight lifting can be a great way for seniors to stay healthy. In fact, strength training is recommended for anyone past the age of 50. If you build your strength and stay fit, you could keep up this activity well into your nineties. (Ask your doctor before beginning any new exercise program.) Many seniors are apprehensive about weight lifting because they don't want to risk injury, but building muscles can actually prevent injury. Yes, there is a risk of injuring yourself while lifting weights, but if you take precautions and lift correctly; the likelihood of hurting yourself is small compared to the benefit. Increased muscle mass gives you increase stability and balance. This means you're less likely to fall and sustain a serious injury. Strength training not only builds muscle mass, it also helps prevent loss of bone mass. Bearing your weight on bones makes them stronger and less likely to break from osteoporosis or from an accident. Lifting weights can actually make your everyday life easier. By building your muscles, you can do things easier and more efficiently; whether it's opening a pill bottle or walking down the hallway, strength training will build muscle and help you use it. Once you reach a certain age, it is almost inevitable that you'll experience some arthritis pain. Arthritis is a natural part of aging. You can't reverse the damage, but you can help decrease the progression and pain from this disease through lifting weights. You may have noticed that you've put on some weight since you were younger. A few extra pounds is not only bad for your health, it can also slow you down and make life harder. As you lose muscle mass, your metabolism decreases. By keeping your muscle mass levels steady (or even increasing them), you can keep your metabolism up and keep the pounds from catching up with you. For seniors, strength training doesn't necessarily mean you have to go pump iron at the gym every weekend. Weight lifting can be beneficial whether you use machines, or use a can of veggies from your cupboard. As long as you are trained in the proper form, it doesn't matter what you're lifting. If you are worried about too much stress, you may want to try using rubber resistance bands or going to water therapy for strength training. These methods are lower impact than lifting weights. Before you start a weightlifting routine, you should consult a doctor. You should also talk to a strength training instructor or physical therapist. They can help you learn the proper form for weight lifting so you can reduce the risk of injury. These people can also instruct you on the appropriate weights and reps for you.