

Myths about Strength Training

There are a number of perpetuated myths that cause people to avoid strength training. With the right knowledge and a safe workout plan, lifting can play a pivotal role in achieving your exercise goals.

Myth: "I will always bulk up if I lift weights."

The fear of increasing body weight or size is one reason some adults, specifically women, will avoid strength training exercises. They mistakenly believe that lifting weights is synonymous with "bulking up."

It is true that strength training does cause an increase in muscle size and that muscle tissue has a higher density than fat tissue. However, it is also true that the more muscle a person has, the greater the impact on fat reduction. This is because muscle is more active than fat.

Every pound of muscle burns between 10 and 20 calories each day, compared to fat, which burns two to five calories each day. As the body burns calories, the muscle grows and takes a more toned shape. This happens because its dense tissue takes up less space than fat, thus becoming more visible as the decrease of body fat occurs.

Myth: "Light weights are the best tools for toning my body."

Often perpetuated by magazines and infomercials, this idea contends that light weights should be lifted in multiple repetitions to accomplish a toned body. Using lighter weights and more repetitions will help increase muscular endurance.

However, if the goal is to build muscle, a person must use weights that he or she can lift no more than eight to 12 times continuously for three to five sets.

Muscle responds to resistance; if the resistance is too light, meaning the person is able to lift the weight for more than the recommended 12 repetitions, the resistance is not enough to stress the muscle. This leaves the body without a reason to grow or develop.

The only way to increase strength, size or power is to take a muscle to temporary exhaustion.

Myth: "Aerobic exercise is the only method for losing weight."

Aerobic exercise generally has been thought to accomplish the task of toning the body better than strength training. If aerobic exercise is performed long enough, a person will burn calories, eventually dropping fat.

However, strength training causes the body to burn fat more efficiently than aerobic exercise if the strength training is performed at a moderate pace for periods longer than 20 minutes.

For example, those who perform only aerobic exercise will use more calories during the time period of exercise, but those who strength train will use a higher amount during the non-exercise time, leading to a higher overall caloric loss over a 24-hour period.

When the daily caloric expenditure exceeds the daily caloric intake on a consistent basis, an individual has the ability to lose weight and gain a lean, defined physique.

Myth: "I do not have enough time to perform strength training."

The most common misconception about strength training involves the time requirement. The average adult simply does not seem to have the time in his or her schedule to perform multiple-set workouts that are essential for muscle development.

But when performed properly, single-set training can be as productive as multiple-set training, provided the set taxes the muscle completely by incorporating as many muscle fibers as possible.

This kind of intensity can often be achieved by doing drop sets in which a person lifts to the point of failure, lowers the weight and continues doing repetitions until another repetition cannot be completed with proper form. If a muscle is truly exhausted, it will afford the person little to no benefit by doing another set.

The exceptions to this concept are muscle groups that have geographical areas with different insertion points, such as the back or chest.

To avoid confusion from conflicting advice supplied by infomercials, magazines, videos, friends and family, remember that effective weight loss programs incorporate three components:

- Strength training
- Cardiovascular exercise
- Eating a healthy diet, dependent on personal fitness goals and scheduling

The implementation of all three components will maximize weight loss and promote optimal health.

Resources

More information on this topic can be found online:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- National Institutes of Health, an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services: www.nlm.nih.gov.

Here when you need us.

Call: 844-207-5465

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

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