Strength Training

About Strength Training

Use strength training to increase your metabolism, burn fat, build muscle, and keep your bones and connective tissue strong. Strength training is sometimes called weight training—or weight lifting. It involves using resistance to exercise muscles. The resistance is usually provided by free weights or machines. Machines are generally easier to use, while free weights require a bit more coordination. Most health clubs offer both.

What to Know Before You Start

A good strength training regimen works all muscle groups 1 or 2 days a week. It is important not to work the same muscle two days in a row. Therefore, you should know which muscles are in each group. If you're a beginner, hire a personal trainer to help you get started. The trainer will help you identify your goals, set the number of repetitions and amount of resistance, and teach you the proper way to use machines or free weights. Using weights or machines incorrectly can result in serious injury.

The Workout

A key to successful strength training is developing a routine. Always start with a warm up to prevent injury. Move slowly and deliberately. Strength training is not a race. Continue a routine for at least six weeks before increasing the difficulty level. Always stretch between sets and after the workout.

The number of reps and sets you complete depend on your goals as well as your abilities. For example, if you want to lose body fat, you need to use enough weight that you can only complete 10 to 12 reps and 1 to 3 sets, resting no more than 1 minute between sets. For muscle gain you should use enough weight that you can only complete 6 to 8 reps, but you should do at least 3 sets. You should also rest at least three days between sets.

Conclusion

Strength Training is an excellent way to tone your body. Use it in combination with cardiovascular exercise to maintain a healthy body.