



## **Strength Training for Time Pressured Adults**

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There are many health related reasons to do strengthening exercises. These include improved (glucose) metabolism, increased bone density, improved blood lipid levels, faster gastrointestinal transit, a sense of well-being, improved posture, less back pain, and less arthritic joint pain. Research shows that strength training, when properly performed in combination with endurance training, reduces resting systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Strength training burns calories. It also increases caloric utilization by adding new muscle tissue (every pound of new muscle uses about 35 additional calories). Following exercise there is an “after burn” effect which continues to use calories.

One of the misconceptions of strength training is that it is too time-consuming. 25 minutes of strength training two or three days a week with single set training is very effective. Some research has shown that two days a week strength training produces 90% results compared to three days a week. This is good news for time pressured adults.

Based on the American College of Sports Medicine, the following guidelines are recommended for active adults of any age:

1. Train two or three days per week.
2. Do one set per exercise.
3. Train at 75 percent of maximum resistance to prevent strains.
4. Do 8-12 repetitions. (If you can't do 8 reps the weight is too heavy)
5. The 5% rule. When you can do 12 reps, increase the weight by 5%.
6. Slow down to at least six second repetitions. Slow movements develop more muscle tension.
7. Do full range of movement, but not through arcs of painful movement.
8. Train muscles so that they are posturally balanced. For example, work both your anterior chest and shoulder blade muscles; work your low back and your abdominals; and work your quadriceps and your hamstrings.
9. If you have medical or orthopedic problems, obtain advice from your physician or physical therapist before starting an exercise program.
10. If you have arthritis or osteoporosis, your exercise program should be designed by a physical therapist.
11. Establish a regular exercise schedule which will become a habit.
12. As a minimum, do 25 minutes of strength training and 25 minutes of aerobic (walking, biking, etc) activity twice per week.

The physical therapists and athletic trainers at North Boulder Physical Therapy would be pleased to design a personal strength program for you or a family member of any age. Please call Debra Layne, PT at 303-601-6666 if you have questions.