



Muscles: Use Them or Lose Them

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You may not think about muscles much during your day, but without them, it would be impossible to complete any activity or even survive. A person has over 600 different muscles in their body. Muscles allow us to move, help with posture and stability, pump blood, help us breathe, as well as, many other things.

As a person ages, they usually become more sedentary and metabolism slows. Lean muscle mass and strength decrease and is replaced with an increased amount of fat. Bones may become weaker from osteoporosis. Balance may be off and a person may be more prone to falling. A person can show signs of depression or forgetfulness. Arthritis, heart disease, increased blood pressure, and diabetes are all real diseases many people deal with every day.

So what is a person to do?

Studies have shown that by doing activities that promote the use of different muscle groups, they can have a significant benefit on muscle strength, metabolism, bone strength, balance, cognitive ability, and disease progression. Any adult, at any age, can benefit from such a program.

Strength training is activity that promotes muscles to grow stronger. With strength training, a person can use resistance tubes or bands, free weights, machines found at the gym, or even their own body weight such as doing pushups or squats. Sometimes, if a person just starts lifting soup cans and gradually increases the amount of weight that is tolerated is beneficial. It definitely is a starting point, especially if your activity has been limited.

Doing strength building exercises can be done in as little as 20-30 minutes per day with 48 hours of rest in between. All muscle groups should be worked 2 to 3 times per week. This includes arms, shoulders, chest, abdomen, back, hips, and knees. The benefits of such activity will not only provide stronger muscles, but can help how a person feels mentally. Having a better outlook and an increase in mental alertness are potential positive outcomes.

Using the correct form and how you breathe is very important with this kind of workout. Weights can gradually be increased as you become stronger. Having a coach for a home or a gym workout is a great place to get started to make sure that your body is performing correctly. You

will be pleasantly surprised as what your body is capable of and how symptoms of diseases you are dealing with can be lessened. As with any exercise program, you should first check with your doctor to be sure that it is safe for you.

Don't let your muscles waste away! Use them and in the process your whole body will thank you!

For more information check out these websites:

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/strength-and-resistance-training-exercise>

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/about-physical-activity/index.html>