

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH STRENGTH TRAINING



WHAT TO EXPECT

Whether you've never lifted weights before or you're coming back to strength training after some time off, here's what you need to know to start building muscle and getting strong.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED



COMFORTABLE, FITTED CLOTHING YOU CAN MOVE IN

Don't wear anything too baggy or loose as you can trip or fall when lifting weights or performing bodyweight exercises such as lunges or squats. Wear clothing that fits you well and keeps you comfortable!



DUMBBELLS

A heavy set of 8-12 lb. dumbbells will work for most people to get started; feel free to start lighter or heavier depending on your strength!



CROSS-TRAINING SHOES

A pair of good, stable tennis shoes that are flexible enough to move around in are essential. Opt for cross-trainers instead of running shoes; they allow you to move more easily from side to side and through other ranges of motion, which is useful for strength training.



RESISTANCE BANDS

These are totally optional, but resistance bands are a great thing to have on hand as you get started because they're a lower impact way to build muscle. They come in various colors and thicknesses based on difficulty; test some out at the store before purchasing!

There are so many more pieces of equipment you can purchase as you go along in your strength training journey, from kettlebells and suspension trainers to stability balls and training ropes! But this will be enough to get you started.

SAFETY TIPS

- **Always warm-up your body before any type of workout, especially strength training.** Your body needs to get blood flowing to the working muscles gradually so that when you begin your actual workout, your body can produce the most force possible to complete each exercise. You may start a warm-up on a piece of cardio equipment for five minutes, then perform another 2-5 minutes of dynamic movement like walking lunges, bodyweight squats, high knees, butt kicks, and arm circles.
- **If using dumbbells or weighted resistance, start with a weight in which you can perform 8-12 repetitions,** making sure the last 1-2 reps are tough to complete but don't compromise your form. Some examples of compromising form would be over-arching of the low back, chin tucked in, and chest collapsing in instead of facing up right. Complete 2-4 sets x 8-12 repetitions of each exercise dependent upon your current fitness level. A general rule of thumb is to increase the weight by 5 percent once you find you can do 10-12 reps with little effort and maintaining proper form.
- **If using bodyweight as resistance, make sure you are focused on proper form.** Things like squats, lunges, planks and push-ups are all great bodyweight exercises.
- **Move through each movement with a controlled range of motion.** Focus on the main muscles you are working rather than just mindlessly moving through the movement.
- **Allow time for a cool down** by gradually decreasing your heart rate. We suggest stretching and foam rolling.

Is it better to train with bodyweight or actual weights?

This is up to you! Using your own bodyweight in moves like squats, lunges, push-ups, and more are some of the most effective ways to build muscle around. But simply for variety, using dumbbells as well as bodyweight can give you a more well-rounded strength workout.

How many times per week should I strength train?

Aim to strength train at least two times per week. You could technically train every day as long as you're not using the same muscles each day, but most people like to get it all done at once, meaning three total-body strength sessions each week. Remember, you still need 150 minutes of cardio each week (as recommended by the CDC) in addition to your strength training to stay healthy!

Where can I find strength training workouts?

We have tons of free strength training workouts on Get Healthy U and you can also find an extensive library of workouts to stream and watch from home at Get Healthy U TV!

STRENGTH TRAINING VOCABULARY

Strength training has its own little language; here are some of the most common terms you'll hear when you start strength training.

Repetitions: The number of a certain exercise you perform within a given set.

Set: The rounds you perform of those repetitions for each exercise. For example, 3 x 12 squats would mean you perform 3 sets of 12 squats.

Load: The amount of demand placed on the body during exercise, whether that be from externally added weight or bodyweight.

Rest Interval: The amount of rest taken place between each set. The heavier the load, the more rest is needed.

Intensity: The effort performed during each exercise. Intensity can be measured by increases in heart rate, a percentage based off a one repetition maximum, or the ability to talk during exercise. The greater the intensity, the less likely you are able to talk comfortably.