

This Free E-Book is brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**Strength Training Guidelines**

**By Matt Russ**

**Strength Training Guidelines by Matt Russ**

This document is to serve as a basic guideline for designing your own strength training routine. It is not an exercise prescription and does not take into account any previous injuries or physical conditions. It is highly recommended you see a physician before starting any exercise routine.

**Men vs Women**

Men and women are created very differently and correspondingly must train differently. First of all women have a fraction of the testosterone necessary to build large amounts of muscle mass, therefore it is counterproductive for a female to train on a heavy resistance mass building routine. In my experience very few females are desirous of building large muscles, in fact this is probably the most common anxiety women have concerning strength training. Second, it is important to note that the single most significant factor in determining body shape is your pre-set genetic code. The maximum your muscle can hypertrophy (get bigger) was largely determined before you were born. That is not to say that you can not drastically change the shape and size of your body, just that it is important to set realistic and attainable goals.

With these facts in mind women and men generally proceed slightly different with a strength training plan. Females use lighter resistance and more repetitions whereas males who want to build muscle mass use heavier weights, increased resistance, and fewer repetitions. If you are a male not wanting to increase the size of your muscles or a female wanting to "get big" this book is not for you. It is written from the prospective of the most common goals of strength training for men and women. "Toning" is not a specific goal and is an ambiguous term that in my experience implies both leanness and muscle size. You can use this book to build muscle size or endurance, increase strength and power.

**I. Exercise Frequency**

I recommend a minimum of two sessions per week of strength training for men and women to ensure continue results. If you attempt to work out more

Than three times per week you are probably wasting your time, conversely one total body workout is enough to maintain your progress, but is not enough to adequately exercise the entire body. Bear in mind that frequency is ultimately affected by the workout intensity, and that frequent low intensity strength training may not yield the same results as a few high intensity work outs.

## Strength Training Guidelines

### II. Basic Guidelines for Advance Weight Training

**Vary Your Routine:** There should be nothing "routine" about your routine. Your body acclimates very quickly to any stress put on it. You can reach a plateau after just a few weeks of strength training. In order to keep getting results you must constantly change your routine to keep your body guessing what is coming next. I recommend you change one or more of the following on a weekly basis.

1. **Exercises:** Changing the type of resistance placed on a muscle keeps it off balance by recruiting new muscle fibers. I recommend using a combination of machines and free weights, each having their pros and cons (we will discuss this latter). Use a variety of exercises listed in the last section for each muscle or muscle group.

2. **Rest:** Muscles can recover up to 90% after two minutes of rest between sets. By reducing the rest period between sets you can place additional stress on the muscle, however, this type of training may be too intense to use every week. For men I recommend using a 1.5 – 2 minute rest period between sets, especially for the larger muscle groups of the legs. Every fourth workout I would reduce the rest period to about half, placing additional stress on the muscles. You will not be able to lift as much weight or accomplish as many sets. At this level of intensity a chest workout may take as little as 10 minutes.

For women who are building strength and endurance I recommend a minimum of 1 minute of rest between sets.

3. **Order:** Change the order in which the muscles are worked weekly with the following exception, always work the bigger muscles first. You can not fully work the large muscles of your back if the biceps are exhausted, and if you can't lift your shoulders how are you going to work your chest. The following plan provides more than enough variety for changing exercise order.

#### 2 Day Split

week 1 week 2

1–legs & shoulders 1–legs & triceps

2–Chest/Back/Triceps/Biceps 2–back / chest / biceps / shoulders

week 3 week 4 week 5

1. legs / biceps 1. legs / chest 1. legs / back

2. back / chest / triceps / 2. back / arms / 2. chest / arms /  
shoulders shoulders shoulders

start over with week 1

#### 3 day split

## Strength Training Guidelines

week 1 week 2 week 3

1. back / biceps
  2. legs / shoulders
  - 3 chest / triceps
1. chest / triceps
  2. legs / biceps
  3. back / shoulders
1. back / chest
  2. legs / shoulders
  3. arms

week 4 week 5 week 6

1. chest / shoulders
  2. legs / triceps
  3. back / biceps
1. arms
  2. legs / chest
  3. back
1. chest / biceps
  2. legs / back
  3. triceps / shoulders

start over with week 1

Number of exercises per body part: The number of exercises performed will vary from muscle group to muscle group. For example, the biceps (a frequently overworked muscle group) will require just a few exercises versus the large muscles in the legs. Also, the number of exercises performed per muscles group will also be directly related to the number of sets per exercise. To keep you from getting

confused I recommend the following number of exercises be performed for each muscle group. Once again this is only a guideline to adequately recruit the fibers of each muscle group. The exact number of exercises performed will vary with intensity, repetitions, and fitness level.

### Men

Chest 4–6 exercises

Back 4–6

Triceps 2–3

Biceps 1–2

Shoulders 2–3

### Women

Chest 3–4 exercises

Back 3–4

Triceps 1–2

Biceps 1–2

Shoulders 2–3

Repetitions per exercise: When selecting the number of repetitions per set it is important to note that the intensity level. For males wanting to build mass each set should be performed to "failure with form." This simply means as many repetitions you can do to momentary muscle failure while maintaining proper form. Women may not need to train this intensely and should concentrate on getting a good muscle "burn" without complete failure.

Men: The following repetition scheme is based on protein breakdown or "tearing down" of the muscle in order to build it back up and make it stronger. More reps will not stress the muscle enough and too few will stress it too much and may promote injury.

## Strength Training Guidelines

Repetitions per set (cont.)

Men

2 sets 3 sets 4 sets

– 10 reps – 12–12

– 6 reps – 8–10

– 6– 8

– 4

Women: Women do not need to "pyramid" like men and may perform the same number of repetitions per set.

1 set 2 sets 3 sets

– 16 reps – 12 to 20 – 12 to 20

Weight: I often tell my clients that the amount of weight they are lifting is not relevant. This is for several reasons. Because you are changing your routine to keep your body "off guard" you may not be able to lift the same amount as your last work out. For example, if you started out fresh with a dumbbell press last week and lifted to failure with 4 repetitions of 60 #'s, and this week you did two sets of push-ups prior to performing the same exercise, you may only be able to lift 45 #'s for 4 reps. If you are lifting each set to failure you have reached the maximum load your muscle can take for X number of reps, and you can not go beyond that limit. This is your primary objective, not to increase the amount of resistance. The amount you are able to lift on any

given day is based on factors such as diet, rest between sets, prior activities, and stress. Do not get discouraged by the amount you are lifting. Concentrate on using proper form to muscle failure. Your first set should be used to warm up the joint and muscle and should be a comfortable weight. Use your first set to judge the progressive weight of your next sets. If your warm up set was very easy, and your goal is to lift 8 reps to failure on your next, you will know to adjust the weight accordingly. Once you get comfortable with your bodies abilities, selecting resistance will become intuitive. "Pyramiding" simply means matching the resistance to the number of repetitions. An example of pyramiding for 3 sets of 12–10–6 repetitions would be using 20 #'s on your first set, 25#'s on the second, and 30#'s on the third.

### III. Advanced Training Techniques

There are several ways to stimulate muscle growth and endurance without necessarily increasing resistance. These techniques are used to keep your body adjusting and avoiding plateaus. It is important to note that each technique should be used sparingly because it might be too intense to use on a regular basis, and may not give a muscle group adequate time to recover and repair.

If you are beginning to strength train I would avoid most of these techniques until you have adequate tendon, joint, and ligament strength.

1. Drop Set: Start with 1 warm up set. Select the amount of resistance you would normally use on your last set to failure. Lift to failure, drop 10% resistance, and lift to failure and drop another 20%, lift to failure, drop 50% and do as many reps as you can. You can do a drop set with four, three, two, or a single drop in weight.

## Strength Training Guidelines

2. **Compound Set:** A compound set is performing two exercises for the same body part back to back with no rest in-between. Ex. bench press / push up; preacher curl / hammer curl; triceps kickback / bench dip. Compound sets will quickly bring a muscle group to failure therefore it is unnecessary to perform multiple exercises.

3. **Super Set:** A super set works opposing muscle groups back to back with no rest in-between sets. An example would be performing a bicep curl and triceps extension, leg extension (quadriceps) and leg curl (hamstrings), seated row (back) and chest press. Super sets are great for minimizing the amount of time needed to workout.

4. **Partials:** Normally an exercise works a joint through a complete range of motion. Partials are used when the muscles are too fatigued to do a complete range of motion and attempt to squeeze the last bit of strength out of them. Once you have reached failure in the full range, complete several more reps to failure using the last half of the range of motion.

5. **Negatives:** You can accomplish just as much in the lowering or negative phase of an exercise as the positive or exertion phase. The negative phase for a bicep curl would be lowering the weight to the starting position. For biomechanical reason your muscles can accommodate 20% more resistance in this phase therefore increased weight and usually a partner are needed. Negatives increase the load on tendons, joints, and ligaments therefore I use negatives on only my most stable clients who have been strength training for some time. You can perform a form of negative resistance by taking as much as ten seconds to lower the weight. This is much safer and easier on the joint. Note that negatives are used for mass building not endurance.

6. **Super Slow:** When you work out you attempt to recruit as many of the fibers in a muscle as possible; at failure you are achieving maximum recruitment. The super slow method is an effective way to recruit muscle fiber without using a lot of weight. Simply take ten seconds to perform both the positive and negative phases of an exercise. You will want to use lower weight. The first few reps will be easy but the muscle will quickly begin to burn. Because the super slow method is tedious I do not recommend its' use in an entire workout. I would use this method sparingly in one set per body part.

7. **Rep Sets:** Your muscles are composed of mix different fibers, some are used for short bursts of power others for endurance. Generally speaking the power fibers hypertrophy, or get bigger than the endurance fibers, but the endurance fibers still can be worked. A rep set works a muscle group using low weight and high repetitions versus the normal mass building routine. I use a single rep set occasionally at the end or a workout for a muscle group.

8. **Pre-Exhaustion:** An example of pre-exhausting the chest would be to perform two sets of push-ups to failure prior to doing your bench press. I like to schedule pre-exhaustive outlines approximately every four weeks. Use light weight and high reps isolating the same muscle group you will use on your next exercise.

9. **Burn Out Set:** A burn out set is similar to a drop set. Perform your normal set group (ex 12-10-6) of an exercise, immediately following the last rep performed drop the weight in half and continue to do as

many reps as you can to failure.

### IV. The Exercises

Compound versus Isolation exercises: For the sake of simplicity we will assume your body can be worked in two ways, by tackling each muscle individually or by working a group of muscles at once. When we work an individual muscle or a muscle group that acts on a joint in the same manner, it is called an isolation exercise. Examples of isolation exercises for the legs are leg extensions (quadriceps), leg curls (hamstrings), and calf raises. Compound exercises work several muscles or muscle groups at once. Examples of compound exercises for the legs include squats, leg presses, and lunges which work the glutes, hamstrings, and quadriceps as well as a variety of smaller support muscles.

Once again I recommend using a variety of compound and isolation exercises. Sometimes I pre-exhaust my quadriceps with leg extensions making them work extra hard when I perform squats, or I finish my leg presses with hamstring curls to really make sure I got everything out of them. Alternate between isolation and compound exercises but remember the large compound movements should be the emphasis of your workouts.

Matt Russ has coached and trained athletes around the country and internationally. He currently holds licenses by USAT, USATF, and is an Expert level USAC coach. Matt has coached athletes for CTS (Carmichael Training Systems), is an Ultrafit Associate. Visit [www.thesportfactory.com](http://www.thesportfactory.com) for more information.

## **Top Ten Reasons To Add Strength Training To Your Daily Routine**

**By Monique Rider**

### **Top Ten Reasons To Add Strength Training To Your Daily Routine by Monique Rider**

1. Strength training tones, builds and firms your body.

Using any type of resistance (bands, weights, water, etc.) tones and builds the muscles. For certain exercises, even body weight can accomplish this. The muscle will become firmer and the skin around the muscle will tighten. This produces a more sculpted look.

2. Strength training burns body fat.

The higher your muscle to fat ratio, the more muscle on your body. The more muscle on your body, the more fat you'll burn because it takes more calories to maintain muscle.

3. Strength training builds strong bones.

Bone density can be increased by strength training. Therefore, reducing the risk of Osteoporosis.

4. Strength training can be done with very little equipment.

Most people think they need expensive equipment to begin a strength training program. Not true! All you need is a set of hand held weights or several sets of weights.

5. Strength training is fun and motivating.

## Strength Training Guidelines

You may not feel motivated to begin a program at first, but after a few weeks of strength training, you'll notice a more sculpted body. Then your motivation will build and you'll want more of that same result. When performed in a group setting, strength training is even more fun and motivating.

6. Strength training helps rid us of mental and physical stress.

Due to the level of concentration needed when strength training and the endorphins that are being released during exercise, stress levels are greatly reduced and you'll have a clearer head!

7. Appetite is improved due to strength training.

You learn to listen to your body and feel what it needs. After a session of weight training you may be hungry but it's not usually for "junk food." The body usually begins to crave whatever it needs to replenish energy after a strenuous workout. You'll find yourself heading for fruit, yogurt, or protein.

8. Strength training is for both male and female.

Yes, women should be strength training right along with men. No, a woman won't wake up one morning looking like a man!! Women don't have the hormones to pack on the muscle like men do. Women who strength train will end up with shapely, sculpted bodies that look healthy and toned.

9. Strength training means your scale weight is irrelevant.

Strength training adds muscle and reduces body fat. Muscle is denser than fat. Therefore, you will not need to pay attention to your weight on a scale if you're strength training. The scale may show you're weight increasing but it may be because you're adding muscle. Learn to judge by your appearance, how you feel and how your clothes are fitting.

10. Strength training is a method of self care that will get you many compliments!!

Do this for yourself! Take care of your body now – it's never too late. Even senior citizens are strength training with amazing results. If you're shy about accepting compliments – you'll be learning how to accept them because many will come your way once you begin a strength training program.

© By Monique Rider 2001

Monique is a survivor of adversity! She believes there are blessings in our struggles. Monique is also the owner of Trinity Coaching Services, a company that provides personal development coaching services. In addition, Monique is a competitive bodybuilder, wife, mother, and published author. To learn more about Monique and personal coaching visit:

<http://home.talkcity.com/workoutpl/trinitycoachingservices/> or email Monique at:

Monique\_Rider@msn.com



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**