

Get Stronger, Live Longer

Lifting weights can help your heart, boost your brain, and give you the muscles of someone 20 years younger

It sounds like some suspicious promise from a late-night infomercial: feel 15 to 30 years younger by exercising just one hour a week! Yet that's exactly what happens when you lift weights. Strength training has been shown to decrease insulin resistance, decrease resting blood pressure, reduce arthritis pain, even improve memory. Some experts believe it's as essential as aer-

obic training: "As good as walking is for a variety of things, it does not address the loss of muscle that accompanies the aging process," says Wayne L. Westcott, Ph.D., fitness research director at the South Shore YMCA in Quincy, Massachusetts, and coauthor of *Strength Training Past 50* (Human Kinetics, 2007). That loss of muscle—about seven pounds per decade for men and five pounds per decade for

women—causes a slowdown in resting metabolism that then translates into a host of health problems.

Much of that age-related decline in muscle mass can be halted—and even reversed—by strength training. Gary Hunter, Ph.D., a professor of human studies and nutrition sciences at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, found that lifting weights for 30 to 40 minutes three times a week increased the muscle strength of women 60 to 77 years old by almost 40 percent—putting them on a par with 35-year-olds. Other studies have found similar benefits from lifting just twice a week.

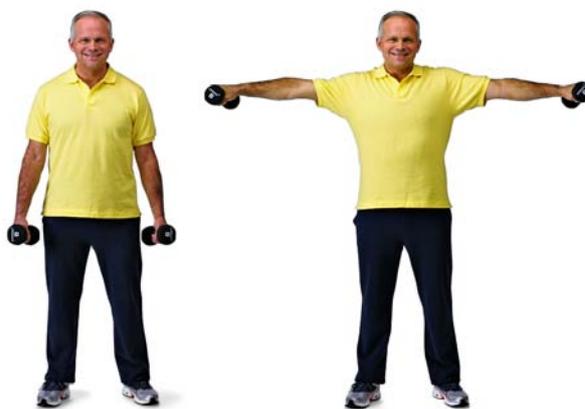
Try the following routine for a month, and see if you don't notice a change. You need only two things: an hour a week (in two 30-minute segments) and a pair of dumbbells.

Your Free-Weight Workout

Beginners should start with one set—8 to 12 repetitions—of each exercise, using 5-to 8-pound weights (you can find them for \$20 or less at any sporting-goods store). More advanced exercisers should shoot for two sets of each exercise, using 10- to 12-pound weights. *Always check with your personal physician before beginning any exercise program.*

↓ Dumbbell squat (quadriceps, hamstrings, gluteals)

Hold a dumbbell in each hand, with palms facing inward, arms down by your sides, feet about hip width apart. Keeping your head up, shoulders back, and eyes fixed straight ahead, slowly squat until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Finish the exercise by slowly returning to a standing position.



↑ **Dumbbell lateral raise (deltoids)** Hold a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing inward, arms down by your sides. Slowly lift the dumbbells away from your body until they're level with your shoulders, so that your body forms a T shape. Lower slowly to the starting position and repeat.



Your Free-Weight Workout *(continued)*



↑ Dumbbell curl (*biceps*)
Hold a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing inward, arms down by your sides. Lift the dumbbells in unison toward your shoulders, rotating your wrists as you do, so that your palms are facing your chest. Slowly lower the dumbbells to the starting position.



↑ Dumbbell overhead triceps extension (*triceps*)
Grasp a dumbbell with both hands and lift it upward until your arms are fully extended, directly above your head. Slowly lower the dumbbell behind your head toward the base of your neck, then raise the dumbbell until your arms are fully extended.

→ Trunk Curl (*abdomen*) Lie on your back on the floor, with your knees up and feet flat on the floor. Place your hands behind your head, then raise your shoulders about 30 degrees off the floor. Be careful not to pull your neck—your hands are there for positioning only. Slowly lower your shoulders to the floor.



↓ Dumbbell one-arm row (*biceps*) With your right knee and hand on a bench and your left foot flat on the floor, grasp a dumbbell with your left hand. Slowly pull the dumbbell to your chest, then lower until your arm is fully extended. Repeat the set with the weight in your right hand.



↑ Dumbbell bench press (*chest*) Lie on a bench with your feet flat on the floor, a dumbbell in each hand, and your hands on either side of your chest near your shoulders. Push your arms up until they are fully extended above your chest, then slowly lower the dumbbells to your shoulders. Repeat.



■ Adapted from *Strength Training Past 50* by Wayne L. Westcott and Thomas R. Baechle (*Human Kinetics*, 2007). ■ Gabrielle deGroot Redford lifts weights twice a week. On most days, she also regularly hoists her five-year-old twins.