



## Strength-Training Guidelines

Strength training doesn't just build strong muscles and bones; it offers big benefits for your heart too. That's why the American Heart Association recommends it as a tool in maintaining heart health, preventing heart disease, and even helping those with heart disease to improve their condition.

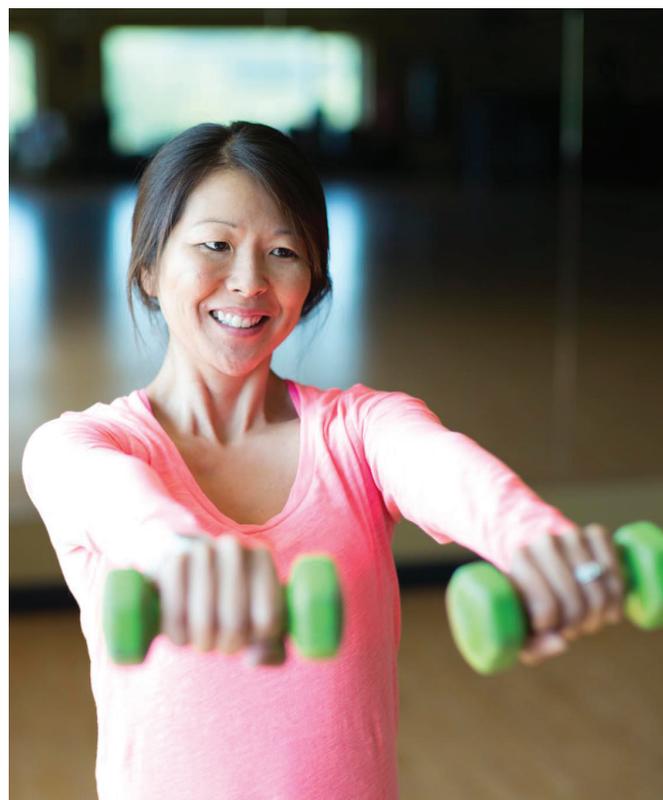
Strength training includes any exercise that causes the muscles to contract against resistance to build the strength, anaerobic endurance and size of skeletal muscles.

### Examples of strength training include:

- Free weights or dumbbells
- Resistance bands or tubing
- Weight machines
- Medicine balls or kettle bells

### Benefits of strength training include:

- Improves muscular strength and endurance
- Improves cardiovascular function
- Increases metabolism, improving weight control
- Improves coronary risk factors – blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, stress
- Improves psychosocial well-being
- Prevents and manages other chronic conditions – low-back pain, osteoporosis



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It's important to maintain proper spinal alignment at all times while using free weights, resistance bands or weight machines. Whether you are standing, sitting or lying down, your ears should be aligned over the shoulders and the shoulders aligned over the hips. When you are upright, the breastbone should be lifted and a small inward curve maintained in the low back. When using equipment with a backrest, use the backrest to support your entire trunk and your head if possible.

When performing strength-training exercises, be sure to keep a regular breathing pattern during the workout. Exhale (breathe out) while performing the lifting phase; inhale (breathe in) to return the resistance to starting position. While moving the resistance, the movement should be slow, smooth and controlled. Never jerk or try to use momentum to lift a greater amount than you can in a controlled fashion.

Strength training is recommended 2 to 3 times per week for overall health. When starting a strength training routine, begin with a load that permits 1 set of 10 repetitions to a moderate level of fatigue. You may progress to 15 repetitions as it becomes easier. The load/weight may be increased when able to perform 15 repetitions comfortably. Your routine also may be progressed by adding sets, with a maximum of 2 to 3. Allow 1 day of rest after working a specific muscle group or body area.



*Health and wellness tips provided by:*

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