Growing Stronger: Strength Training for Older Adults


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Abstract

In choosing to read this book, you have taken the first step on a journey toward greater strength and vitality. Growing Stronger was written for you—the older adult who wants to grow stronger, healthier, more active, and more independent. You may be inactive or only mildly active at the moment. You may know that regular exercise is important for your health and well-being and want to get started on a program of physical activity. But you may feel that you don’t have the necessary information. Perhaps you are concerned that because of your age or health problems physical activity may not be safe for you. Or perhaps you have had trouble finding or staying with a suitable program. This book gives you a safe, simple, and highly effective exercise program based on the principles of strength training. Studies at laboratories around the world have shown that strength training benefits women and men of all ages and all levels of fitness. According to Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General (1996), experts agree that aerobic activities should be supplemented with strength-developing exercises at least twice per week.

Before you start this program, answer the “How Fit and Strong Are You Now?” questions. These questions will help you determine your current level of strength and independence. Try returning to them again, after you have been strength training for three months, six months, and twelve months. This will help you gauge how useful the program has been to you. Keep in mind that if you have not been able to sustain the program for any reason —
say, illness or injury -- your score will likely remain the same or even decrease. Don't be discouraged -- just try to get back on track.