

FITNESS

Common Questions About Weight-Lifting

Question: Is there any reason to lift weights?

Answer: Lifting weights, if done correctly, can work wonders no matter what your age. In fact, structured, systematic use of weights, particularly machines, will help prevent osteoporosis, increase your metabolism rate and significantly minimize back and shoulder strains from daily activities and other athletic pursuits. Always check with your doctor before starting any new exercise routine.

Question: Is lifting weights harmful for someone who's never done it?

Answer: If done with proper form, weight workouts can be safer than many other activities such as bowling and gardening. With correct weight routines, the tension is more equally distributed in a person's body.

Question: How often should I lift weights?

Answer: Aim for three or four times a week. Do not work the same muscles two days in a row. Muscles become stronger during rest. However, if you use different sets of muscles, it's okay to lift weights two days in a row.

Question: How much weight should I lift?

Answer: Beginners should use weights that are light enough for 15-20 repetitions. Although, your muscles may be strong enough for heavier weights if doing only 8 repetitions, your tendons may not be as strong. Tendons attaching muscles to bones may be fragile and prone to injury, even though the muscles can handle heavier loads. Light weights will strengthen tendons with many repetitions. After 4 – 6 weeks, your joints will be able to handle heavier weights. To produce greater health results, increase the amount of weight you lift over time. After your tendons catch up to your new muscle strength, choose a weight that requires you to exert yourself somewhat to complete 8 – 12 repetitions.

Don't increase the weight too rapidly, however, because you may injure yourself. Challenge yourself gradually. When 8 – 12 repetitions become fairly easy, move to the next level. Otherwise, you'll end up maintaining your physical state, rather than improving it.

Source: The American Institute for Cancer Research

