

## Strengthening activity pros and cons

Strengthening activities (also known as resistance training, weight training or weight lifting) are activities that are done for strong, healthy muscles and bones. These activities use movements of muscle groups that increase in weight and frequency over time, to increase muscle strength and endurance.

Here are some activities that improve strength, along with some advantages and disadvantages of each.

### ***Strength training with simple accessories***

This can include training with free weights (dumbbells and barbells), body weight (using the weight of your own body), chair exercises, or resistance tubes or bands.

**Pros.** Strength training is a weight-bearing activity so it strengthens your bones, builds muscles and burns Calories. As well as strengthening the targeted muscles, this kind of training also strengthens surrounding muscles. It can help improve your ability to do day-to-day activities so you can keep your independence.



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An important part of being healthy is exercising regularly and staying active. PAL (Physical Activity Line) is a phone line, website and physical activity resource designed to help you make wise choices about physical activity so you can enjoy life to its fullest. PAL is brought to you by the CSEP Health and Fitness Program of BC and the Public Health Agency of Canada. PAL is operated by university/college-trained exercise professionals.

**Cons.** Since you can be injured if you use incorrect form or use heavier weights than you can manage, you have to build up the amount of weight gradually. Get advice from a qualified exercise professional on how to use equipment and how to create a strength training program that's right for you.

### ***Strength training with machines***

**Pros.** An ideal weight-bearing activity for beginners because each machine targets a specific muscle group.



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**Cons.** You need either a gym membership or home equipment, and both can be expensive. It's necessary to have an exercise professional introduce you to the machines and create a program that slowly builds up activity.

## **Gym membership**

**Pros.** Gyms have a wide range of equipment and also offer classes like aerobics or Pilates (an exercise method designed to improve flexibility and strength, and create balance in the body). Instructors are usually available to help you use the equipment correctly and reduce your risk of injuries.

**Cons.** Gym membership can be expensive. If you go to the gym at busy times (for instance, after work), the equipment may already be in use. Some people feel embarrassed or nervous about doing exercises in front of other people. The staff may not have the necessary qualifications to assist you.

## **Home fitness equipment**

**Pros.** Home fitness equipment includes stationary bicycles, treadmills, balls, resistance bands, etc. Being active at home is ideal for people who are house-

bound (for instance, elderly people or parents of small children). It can also be more comfortable for people who don't want to exercise outdoors or in gyms. When you're at home, you can watch TV or listen to music while exercising.

**Cons.** Home fitness equipment can be expensive and take up a lot of space. Walking, running or cycling in one place can be boring. To avoid risk of injury, have a qualified person show you how to use the equipment.

*Here are some other sheets related to this topic:*

- Myths about physical activity.*
- Muscular strength and endurance.*
- Weight lifting tips.*
- Injury prevention.*
- Choosing an activity that's right for you.*
- Precautions for strengthening activities.*
- How to choose safe equipment.*
- How to get started.*

## **Here's where to get any or all of these sheets:**

tel: 1-877-725-1149

email: [info@physicalactivityline.com](mailto:info@physicalactivityline.com)

web: [www.physicalactivityline.com](http://www.physicalactivityline.com)

**The health information provided on this sheet is only a guide.** You also need to rely on your common sense and good judgment. If you receive advice from a doctor or health professional that doesn't agree with the information provided here, follow the advice of your doctor or health professional since it's based on your specific history and needs.