Toolbox Talks | Strength and Resistance Training

Strength and resistance training is one of the four types of exercise along with **endurance**, **balance** and **flexibility**. Ideally, all four types of exercise would be included in a healthy workout routine.

They don't all need to be done every day, but variety helps keep the body fit and healthy, and makes exercise interesting. **The American Heart Association recommends strength training at least twice per week.** Strengthening your muscles gives you the ability to perform everyday activities and helps protect your body from injury. Stronger muscles also lead to a boost in your metabolic rate, which means you'll burn more calories even when your body is at rest.

Don't worry – we're not talking about professional bodybuilding. Simple, weight-bearing exercises that use free weights, machines or your body's own resistance are the focus. You can do these workouts separate from your cardio activity or add resistance on to an existing workout. Choose the time and type of activity that works for you.

A well-rounded strength-training program provides the following benefits:

- Increased strength of bones, muscles and connective tissues (tendons and ligaments)
- Lower risk of injury

- Increased muscle mass, which makes it easier for your body to burn calories and thus maintain a healthy weight
- Better quality of life

You may wish to consult with a certified fitness professional to learn safe technique before beginning a strength-training program. Aim to exercise each muscle group at least two times per week, with a minimum of two days of rest between workouts. Training more frequently or adding more sets may lead to slightly greater gains, but the minimal added benefit may not be worth the extra time and effort – not to mention the added risk of injury.

Frequently Asked Questions:

How do I get into strength training?
Start slow! There are plenty of exercises using only body weight.

Discussion Question:

- In your typical workout are you targeting different muscle groups?