

# Strength training benefits are endless!

## **1. Strength training will create a desirable toned sculpted body.**

Lou Schuler, a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist and co-author of The New Rules of Lifting for Women, asserts, "If the weights are unchallenging, your muscles won't grow. If your muscles don't grow, they won't look any better than they do now, even if you could somehow strip off whatever fat sits on top of them" (Schuler 4). The common fear of getting too big is unfounded. Women do not have the necessary hormones to increase muscle mass like a man. Specifically, their testosterone levels are significantly lower. So, regardless of how heavy the weight is, the hormonal response of a woman is not enough to produce very large muscles. In fact, according to Dr. William Kraemer, a renowned strength-training researcher, even when women are given steroids, their muscles are still not comparable to those of a trained man.

In one study conducted by Dr. Kraemer, fraternity members were presented with two photographs. When asked to choose, 98% preferred the image of a muscular athletic female over that of a thin and waif-like female. This study directly contradicts the popular belief that men only want the toothpick image women see all over the media.

The point? You need challenging weights to stimulate muscle growth. You need growth to truly change the shape of your body. Last but definitely not least, men like some muscle and shape to their women!

## **2. Strength training helps create definition.**

Heavy loads reduce subcutaneous (below the skin) fat levels, creating a more "defined" look. In reality, the size of the muscle fibers may increase but the reduction in subcutaneous fat actually decreases the circumference of the trained areas. This means you will almost always *lose* inches by training with challenging weights. These benefits cannot be achieved lifting lighter weights for 15-20 repetitions.

## **3. Strength training decreases risk of osteoporosis and injury.**

Strength training increases bone, tendon, and ligament strength and mass much more effectively than higher repetition programs. This reduces a woman's risk of developing osteoporosis or suffering from musculoskeletal injuries. The optimal protocol for bone mass and strength is 3-4 sets of compound movements for 6-10 repetitions. This is especially important for teenage girls, because their bodies are most responsive to bone-strengthening stimuli. Once their teen years are over, they have missed an opportune time to develop bone density and strength. Lesson: begin strength training now, because it's much more difficult to build up bone density the longer you wait.

## **4. Strength training is essential to increasing physical and mental strength.**

In order to build strength you must challenge your muscles. Simply using 5 lb. dumbbells to do a triceps kickback 3 days a week will at best maintain what strength you have. You have to present a different stimulus to the body, and heavy weights are the way to do it. The hard work in the gym will naturally provide strength for everyday activities. You will no longer have trouble carrying groceries up the stairs, low back pain starts to dissipate, and you can take up activities you never considered before: hiking, tennis, or other leisure activities that will greatly enhance your quality of life. Gaining physical strength is truly an empowering feeling, and that confidence will tie into other areas of your life.

## **Hopefully you've seen the light when it comes to strength training.**

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