

Stronger than Sarcopenia



Sarcopenia, Muscle Health, and Reduced Physical Activity

Sarcopenia (saar-ko-pee-ni-uh) is the loss of muscle and strength that can happen when someone gets older and does less physical activity. This may cause trouble with daily activities like standing from a chair, walking, twisting the lid off a jar, or carrying groceries.

Certain conditions and illnesses may necessitate social distancing, isolation, or a reduction in physical activity. When individuals are required to limit their interactions and activities, such as during outbreaks of infectious diseases or due to chronic health conditions (e.g., Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, POTS, etc.) exercise and other physical activities at gyms or public facilities may be restricted to minimize health risks. These measures can significantly impact the physical fitness, muscle strength, and overall wellness of older adults. Consequently, these factors can increase the rates of sarcopenia and frailty. Studies have shown that social distancing and isolation due to various health conditions can result in:

- Negative effects on mental health, social well-being, and physical activity in older adults.
- Less physical activity resulting in increases in fat and decreases in muscle.
- Loss of gains from physical fitness leading to decreased immunity.
- Increased vulnerability to infections for people with weakened immune systems and underlying diseases.

You don't have to go to a gym to strengthen your muscles. You can lift weights at home, work with resistance bands, use your body weight for resistance (for example, push-ups and sit-ups), and dig or shovel in the garden. Even lifting canned goods can be considered an activity that strengthens your muscles.

Staying active is important at all ages and helps decrease your risk of getting sarcopenia.

It is never too late to rebuild your strength.

You can begin or restart physical activity at any time to help increase your muscle strength.

Tips for Starting a New Exercise Routine

It can be hard to start a new exercise routine. Here are a few tips that can help!



- Try a manageable routine that you think you can do regularly, starting with 1–2 days per week.
- Check out resources from the [CDC](#), [Move Your Way](#), [AARP](#), and the [National Council on Aging](#) to find an exercise program that works best for you.
- Be sure to discuss exercise with your health care provider to find the best options to meet your abilities.

Connect with Us!

To learn more, please visit [womenshealth.gov/sarcopenia](https://www.womenshealth.gov/sarcopenia).

