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## How to start strength training

1/14Getting stronger isn't just about looking good; it also helps build bone strength and improves balance. This means you're less likely to fall and get hurt. 2/14Bodyweight exercises like pushups and pullups can be a great way to build muscle without needing any special equipment. You can also use simple props like resistance tubing or exercise balls to add variety to your workouts. 3/14Free weights don't mean free as in no cost! It means you're using dumbbells or barbells that aren't attached to machines. Training with free weights can be just as safe as using machines if you learn how to use them correctly. 4/14Weight machines are generally safer because they help guide your movements, but they might not work the muscles in a way that feels as natural as free weights. Machines can also be more expensive than free weights or home gym equipment. 5/14To get the most out of strength training, it's essential to do exercises correctly. This will help you avoid injuries and ensure that your hard work pays off. If you're new to weightlifting, consider getting a personal trainer who can teach you proper form. 6/14Your muscles need time to recover between workouts. A good rule of thumb is to work each muscle group two times a week, giving them at least one full day's rest in between. This will help prevent overtraining and reduce the risk of injury. 7/14When starting out with strength training, take it slow! Your body needs time to adapt to new demands, so begin with lighter weights or fewer reps and gradually increase the intensity as you get more comfortable. 8/14As your technique improves, focus on adding weight in small increments. Aim for 12-15 repetitions per set and feel like you're working at maximum capacity towards the end of each set. If your form breaks down with heavier weights, take some off! 9/14Remember to breathe naturally during strength training. Exhale while lifting and inhale as you lower the weight to maintain proper form and prevent injuries. 10/14Before any workout, warm up with 10 minutes of light cardio (jogging, biking, or even a brisk walk) followed by some simple exercises to get your muscles ready for the challenge ahead. 1. Start by doing squats and lunges. 2. Keep back straight on bench. 3. Pull up when lifting, otherwise get less chest workout, and may hurt shoulders. 4. Use stomach muscles and don't lock elbows into extension. 5. Relax neck while working out. 6. Work with expert to learn the exercise, start slow. 7. Turn feet slightly out, keep them at shoulder width, push chest out. 8. Keep knees from moving past toes while lowering down. 9. Do it without equipment or use a sturdy wall for support. 10. Face the wall and take hold of it with palms up at shoulder height. 11. Slowly lower upper body towards the wall, bend elbows. 12. Breathe out as you push back up. Starting with bodyweight exercises can help build strength and burn calories, as there are numerous effective exercises that provide an intense workout without the need for weights. Some of our favorite bodyweight exercises include: Forearm plank Side plank Mountain climbers Push ups Tricep push-ups Squats Reverse lunges Superman Glute bridges Once you feel comfortable with a full-body workout, move on to light weights and gradually increase the weight as your body adapts. It's essential to start with weights that allow you to maintain proper form and avoid injury. A balanced strength training program should target all major muscle groups, including the upper body, lower body, and core. Aim to work each muscle group at least once a week, either through a full-body workout or by focusing on specific days of the week. It's also crucial to warm up before each workout and cool down afterwards to prevent injury and reduce muscle soreness. Additionally, incorporating compound exercises into your routine can help maximize efficiency and improve overall strength, balance, and cardiovascular endurance. Listen to your body and take rest days as needed, especially in the initial stages of strength training. This allows your muscles sufficient time to recover between workouts. A balanced routine, including cardio and full rest days, helps prevent fatigue. Tracking progress is key; set goals for exercises, weights, or workout times, and monitor changes every few weeks. A well-fueled diet, with a mix of protein, healthy fats, complex carbohydrates, and water, aids in muscle growth. Proper hydration before workouts can be achieved by drinking 16 ounces of water two hours prior, plus additional 8-ounce intervals during exercise. Consistency is crucial; establish a realistic routine that you can maintain, rather than starting with overly aggressive schedules. Seek guidance from experienced friends or personal trainers if needed, as they can provide expert instruction and motivation. For those looking to start, Hydrow's workout library offers comprehensive resources, including beginner-friendly sessions and advanced muscle-building routines, accessible in the comfort of your living room. Getting started with strength training is not as intimidating as it seems. Whether you're just beginning your fitness journey or already well-vested, incorporating some type of resistance into your workouts is crucial. This can include weightlifting, bodyweight exercises, or even household activities like gardening or yoga. By doing so, you'll be able to burn calories more efficiently - having more muscle mass increases metabolism, causing you to burn calories throughout the day even when not working out. Reduce injury risk - building strong muscles also supports bones and connective tissue, making your body better equipped to handle stress. Maintain a healthy physique - studies have shown that regular strength training can lead to improved heart health, stronger bones, lower blood pressure, reduced low back pain, and enhanced sleep quality. Improve mental well-being - releasing endorphins through exercise can help alleviate anxiety and even combat depression. Boost self-assurance - mastering new skills always increases confidence levels. Before starting any weightlifting regimen, it's a good idea to consult with your doctor if you have pre-existing medical conditions or concerns. A significant number of people underestimate the importance of strength training, and statistics suggest that many adults fail to meet minimum guidelines for muscle-strengthening activities. It's common for individuals to be discouraged from starting due to misconceptions about strength training. However, this doesn't have to be the case. You don't need to join a gym; there are numerous benefits to working out at home - it's free, convenient, and private. Utilize resources such as DVDs, online fitness platforms, or mobile apps to guide your sessions. Familiarize yourself with basic equipment through a gym's free orientation program. If you do choose to use weights, opt for weight machines that offer more stability than free weights. Remember, anything providing resistance can suffice - including bodyweight, bands, or even household objects. For beginners, starting with bodyweight exercises is perfectly sufficient, but it may be necessary to introduce additional equipment as your body adapts and you need more challenge. Affordable home gym equipment is widely available, so there's no need to break the bank. Be sure to have a variety of weights at your disposal - including light, medium, and heavy sets tailored to your specific needs. You can start by stating that you've completed 2 sets of 10 reps of biceps curls. To develop a workout routine, follow these guidelines: Begin with a straightforward program, focusing on strength training for all major muscle groups on two consecutive days per week. This will help establish a solid foundation and promote progress over time. Choose the right weight to lift - it should neither be too light nor too heavy. If you find it easy to complete a set without much effort, the weight is likely too light. Conversely, if your form suffers or you experience discomfort, the weight is probably too heavy. Start with a warm-up, typically 5-10 minutes of cardio or some gentle sets of each exercise using a light weight. Maintain proper form throughout the workout to avoid injuries and maximize benefits. Pay attention to posture, move slowly, and breathe naturally. Many people forget to exhale during intense exercises, but this can help fuel movement. Consider utilizing interactive fitness mirrors that offer trainer guidance in the comfort of your own home. Make sure to rest for at least a day between workouts to allow your body to recover and build lean muscle tissue. Aim to challenge yourself rather than overexert, especially in the initial weeks when focusing on learning exercises rather than lifting heavy weights or doing numerous repetitions. Your muscles play a crucial role in these exercises. However, the order of your workouts is up to you. Choosing between reps and sets can be confusing. Your goals will dictate how many reps and sets you do. To lose body fat and build muscle, use enough weight that it's challenging to complete 8-12 repetitions and 1-3 sets - beginners start with 1 set, while intermediate and advanced individuals do 2-3. Rest for 30 seconds to 1 minute between sets and at least one day between workout sessions. For muscle gain, use enough weight that you can only complete 4-8 repetitions and 3 or more sets. Rest for 1-2 minutes between sets and 2-3 days between sessions. Beginners should wait several weeks for conditioning before tackling this level of difficulty. You may need a spotter for many exercises. For health and muscular endurance, use enough weight that you can only complete 12-16 repetitions, 1-3 sets, resting 20-30 seconds between sets, and at least one day between workout sessions. Start with a lighter weight and perform one set, adding weight until you feel challenged but can do the desired number of reps with good form. If using a resistance band, multiple bands may be needed due to varying muscle strengths. Begin with a 5-minute warm-up of light cardio and complete one set of each exercise, resting briefly between exercises. Modify or skip any exercise causing pain or discomfort. Trying out weightlifting for the first time can be daunting, especially when it comes to navigating the gym or figuring out how to use home equipment. To make things clearer, we've created a comprehensive guide to strength training for beginners that covers everything from getting started to improving your skills. Weight training is essentially about using opposing forces or loads to build muscle mass and increase overall strength across the body. It can be done at the gym with free weights, fixed weights, or machines, or even at home with the right equipment. The main goal of weight training is to give the body a stimulus that requires adaptation. For beginners, focusing on compound exercises that work multiple muscle groups at once is key. These exercises help build overall strength and can be modified as needed. Functional training, on the other hand, focuses on practical exercises that improve daily functioning, like squats helping with heavy lifting. Regular weight training has numerous benefits, including lowering cholesterol levels, reducing stress and improving mood, increasing muscle mass, and even burning fat. It also improves posture, reduces injury risk, increases bone density, and can help with sleep quality. Moreover, studies have shown that resistance training can lead to a longer life expectancy by reducing the likelihood of death. Resistance training combined with aerobic exercise proves more effective than aerobic exercise alone in heart disease rehabilitation, according to a 2021 review. Weight training not only boosts physical strength but also improves cardiovascular health, lowers cholesterol, enhances posture, and maintains metabolism by increasing muscle tissue activity. As muscle mass increases, so does resting energy expenditure, making weight training an excellent way to burn more calories at rest. Additionally, the focus required during weightlifting can promote mindfulness and reduce stress levels. For women, weight training is particularly beneficial as it helps mitigate natural muscle loss after age 30. Although men naturally have more muscle mass due to higher testosterone levels, women can still achieve significant strength gains with consistent effort. Weightlifting can also boost testosterone levels, leading to increased energy, sexual desire, and muscle gain. To build strength during heavy deadlifts, consider using weightlifting gloves for a good grip. A strong core is essential, and proper form is key. If you're already at a gym in London, they'll likely have everything you need. For beginners, bodyweight exercises like press-ups, planks, and squats can be effective. As you progress, use weights and focus on lower rep ranges (below 12 reps) to recruit muscle fibers efficiently. Newbie gains are achievable with weight training. It's relatively easy for newbies to see improvements in a short time by using their own bodyweight or progressing to kettlebells and barbells. Consistency is crucial, so aim for two to three weight training sessions per week. You can expect a 10% increase in strength within a fortnight, but this may vary depending on individual factors. You don't need weights to make strength improvements. Bodyweight exercises like pull-ups, push-ups, and explosive power exercises can be just as effective. Experiment with variations, such as changing angles or using different body parts, to challenge yourself and develop your strength further. Maxey is an effective way to improve power and strength by incorporating controlled bodyweight moves like tempo changes, squat jumps, and plank jacks into your workout routine. To prepare for a workout, one must be in the right mindset. This includes taking deep breaths and entering the gym with confidence. For those who lift at home, preparation is key. This includes clearing space, setting up a playlist, and getting the necessary equipment to avoid distractions and ensure proper form. It's essential to start with lighter weights and gradually increase them as you become more comfortable with the exercises. Focus on proper form over weight, even if it means starting with very light weights. For those who need guidance, consulting a personal trainer can be beneficial in ensuring proper technique. Additionally, there are many online resources available for learning proper form and technique. Keeping track of your workouts is crucial to progress and improvement. This can be done by logging your exercises, reps, sets, and weight used on an app or phone. Staying consistent with strength training is key. It takes time and structure to develop strength, but the results are noticeable in a few weeks' time. For beginners, starting with simple exercises like squats, deadlifts, and bench presses can help build form and foundation for more complex workouts. While weight training has many benefits, it's just one part of a well-rounded fitness program. Cardiovascular exercise is also essential for heart health, circulation, and lowering blood pressure. Here's how to incorporate cardio into your routine, without feeling overwhelmed - make it a lifelong habit. Gentle exercises like walking or swimming can give you the same workout as sprinting around a park. If you're unsure whether to do cardio first or weights, consider your goals. For better endurance, do cardio before weights, but for burning fat and losing weight, do it after. For upper body strength training days, do either first - while for lower body strength training days, do cardio after. If your goal is general fitness, choose the one you're less comfortable with first. There's also active recovery, which involves light exercise to boost blood flow, like walking or yoga. NEAT exercise is all the movement we do outside of demarcated workouts, such as playing with kids or taking the stairs instead of lifts. It should make up a significant part of our daily activity levels. 1. Push-up: Start in a plank position, then lower your body until your chest almost touches the ground. Push back up to the starting position. If needed, drop down to your knees instead of your toes. Crab walk back to the start. 2. Tricep dips: Sit on the edge of a bench or chair with your palms facing down next to your thighs. Scoot forward until your hips and butt are in front of the seat, then bend your elbows and lower yourself until your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Push back up to the starting position. 3. Body weight tempo squat: Stand with your legs hip-width apart, then lower your bum back for four counts until it's parallel with your knees or slightly lower. Pause for two counts, then return to standing over four counts. Repeat. 4. Lateral lunge: Start with your feet shoulder-width apart, then step out with one foot as wide as possible. Lower your hips down and back while keeping the other leg straight, stretching the groin on that side. Push yourself back up to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. 5. Step-up: Stand in front of a step or bench, place one foot on the step, then push your body up until your leg is straight. Return to the start. Do each exercise for up to 12 reps, depending on the weight and difficulty level you've chosen. Aim for three to five sets of each exercise before moving on. Grab a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip, holding them about shoulder-width apart. Bend your hips and lower your torso until it's almost parallel to the floor, keeping your knees slightly bent and your lower back arched. Now, squeeze your shoulder blades together and pull the dumbbells up to the sides of your torso. Pause, then return to the starting position. We need to watch out for common strength training mistakes. Lifting too heavy is a major no-no - it can lead to injury. Instead, choose a weight that allows you to work through 80% of your reps comfortably, with only the last 20% feeling challenging. Don't be afraid to start lighter and progress gradually. Also, don't neglect rest periods between sets. These periods are crucial for muscle recovery, so try to take at least 60 seconds to recharge. This will help you push harder during the 'on' periods of your workout. Another mistake to avoid is working the same muscle group too often. Make sure to balance your upper and lower body workouts with cardio and recovery activities each week. Here's a rewritten version of the text, incorporating some occasional spelling errors (SE) for variation: Eccentric: The lowering phase of an exercise, in which the muscle lengthens. Extension: Movements of a limb going from a bent to a straight position. Failure: The point in an exercise at which the exerciser has fully fatigued their working muscles and can no longer perform any additional reps. Flexion: The movement of a limb going from a straight to a bent position, orario the opposite of extension. Form: A specific way of performing a movement or exercise, ensuring the correct form allows the exerciser to avoid injury and maximise their benefits. Free weights: Barbells, dumbbells, kettlebells, and other similar pieces of equipment that don't have a fixed movement pattern, unlike a cable machine for example. Frequency: How often exercise or the completion of a full workout should happen, often written as per week. Full body training: Training the full body during one workout, rather than splitting workouts up into body parts. Hypertrophy: The scientific term meaning an increase in muscle mass and relative muscle strength. Intensity: The degree of effort put into each set of exercises, including how strenuous or eas it feels for the exerciser. Isolation exercise: An exercise that stresses a single muscle, or muscle group, isolating it from the rest of the body. Isometric: A muscular contraction where the muscle maintains a constant length and the connecting joint does not move. Isotonic: A muscular contraction in which there is a change in the length of the muscle; for example concentric and eccentric movements. Mass: The relative size of a muscle group, or the entire body, measured by its volume. Muscular endurance: The ability of a muscle to sustain repeated contractions against a resistance for an extended period of time, requiring good circulatory and nervous system function. Negative reps: Performing multiple reps of only the eccentric phase of a lift or exercise, targeting slow and controlled movements. Overload principle (aka progressive overload): Applying a greater than normal stress or load on the body, required for training adaption and progression to occur, as muscles adapt to increasing demands. Partial reps: Performing an exercise without going through the complete range of motion of the muscle, potentially limiting progress and putting strain on joints. PB (Personal Best): The best performance of an exercise; often measured in weight lifted or reps performed in strength training, serving as a benchmark for improvement. Periodisation: The systematic planning of a training programme to allow the exerciser to reach their best possible performance in a specific time frame, optimising workouts and recovery. Progressive resistance: Increasing the weight used whilst exercising as muscles gain strength and endurance, continuously challenging and adapting to new demands. Push/Pull training: A training method in which the push muscles (chest, triceps, quads and lateral and medial deltoids) and pull muscles (back, biceps, rear deltoids and hamstrings) are trained on separate days to avoid overstressing the muscles, allowing for balanced development. Reps (Repetitions): The number of times an exerciser performs an exercise, or lifts and lowers a weight, in one set, providing insight into their current strength levels. Rest: The pause or break between sets designed to allow the muscles to partially recover from intense effort, helping prevent overtraining. RPE (Rated Perceived Exertion): The scale used to measure the intensity of exercise; 1 being easy and 10 being very strenuous, taking into account personal comfort levels. Sets: A group of reps performed back to back, after which a short rest period is taken, typically 60-90 seconds, before continuing with more sets. Split training: Also known as a "workout split" this refers to splitting the muscles of the body up so that they are worked in different training sessions or on different days of the week, allowing for varied focus and reduced overtraining risk. Spotter: A person who watches an exercising partner closely and is on hand to offer help during an exercise if it is needed, providing support and safety. Strength training: Using resistance training to build maximum muscle, incorporating elements like hypertrophy and strength gains through progressive overload. Superset: Alternating between three exercises until a set is complete, while maintaining tempo and volume. Tempo refers to the pace of lifting, where concentric, isometric, and eccentric phases are each assigned a count to create the desired speed. Volume refers to the number of repetitions or sets performed during a workout. Weight measures the mass of equipment used, typically measured in kg or lbs. One Rep Max (1RM) represents the maximum weight an individual can lift with maximum effort. To optimize strength training, consider supplementing with creatine and incorporating various set types such as drop sets, supersets, trisets, and pyramid sets to keep workouts engaging and progressive.